



### AMERICAN

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# NATIONAL PREACHER.

I.

#### GOD'S MORAL SYSTEM, SUPERIOR TO THE MATERIAL.

BY REV. R. S. STORRS, JR.,

PAPTOR OF THE CHURCH OF THE PILORINS, BROOKLYS, M. Y.

"And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail."—LUKE EVI. 17,

THE conception of the Material System is naturally accompanied in the mind by the impression of its permanence. Even the child perceives the solidity and hardness of the objects that surround him; and their power at once so absolutely to uphold and to restrict him, may well seem the evidence of their necessary duration. And as he comes to understand more fully the extent, and structure, and the history of the system, this first impression is naturally confirmed. As he learns how vast the Earth is,—not bounded by the horizon as he supposed, but bearing upon its mighty bosom islands, and realms, and empires, and continents even, with fathomless oceans poured round them as their drapery; as he examines the physical structure of the earth, and drives his drill into the granite bars that lock and interlock beneath its surface, or traces the ridges of rock and iron that stretch across it as its ribs of strength; as he follows backward the many generations that in succession have lived and labored upon its globe, and feels how changeless it has been through all their changes,—how absolutely it is now the same as when the Roman eagles traversed its surface, as when the temple of the Sun was standing in Palmyra, as when the hundred-gated Thebes stretched its stupendous front along the Nile; nay, as passing backward from even this computation he learns through what vast cycles and periods, and into what remote, impenetrable abysses, the researches of the naturalist seem to carry its duration :- and most of all, as rising from this view of the Earth, he learns to comprehend in some degree the magnitude of the System in which it is but part, and of that more sublime and awful structure in which our System itself is but a distant and unimportant province, the vestibule to the Temple;—at each ascending step in this great series, the involuntary belief of the permanence of the Universe, still gathers within him; the possibility of its dissolution seems unreal and incredible; and practically he feels, and he acts on the belief, that the pillars of Heaven shall not tremble, and the foundations of the Earth shall

never be removed.

And this is a conviction against which argument seems vain. Science may teach him that there are forces at work whose tendency is to the destruction of the System. Astronomical records may show him that these forces have been disastrously active in the ages that are gone. A searching philosophy may even discover to him that where there is mutation there is not self-originated and necessary existence; and that therefore all the changes in the earth are so many evidences of its dependence upon sustaining power, and so many signs and marks of its probable dissolution. And Revelation may speak, with her authoritative voice, proclaiming the actual origin of the worlds, and their continued support by the hand of their Creator; showing that what we call the laws of nature are really but modes in which God acts, and therefore are liable to be at any moment suspended or reversed by his volition. And yet, in spite of all, it is the practical conviction,—that upon which we act even unconsciously,—that this so solid earth on which we tread is permanent; that the infinite cope which arches above our heads as gloriously as when the shepherds watched it upon the plain of Shinar, must stand securely; and that, though here and there a part may fail, to crush the whole into nothingness would almost surpass the capacity of Omnipotent force.

It is therefore a striking and remarkable declaration which is recorded in the text; a declaration which grows upon us as we consider it, and which opens before us still wider views: that it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than for one tittle of the law to fail. Clearly, and most impressively, it teaches us the Eternity of God's Moral Law, and its Supremacy in the Universe. By no other mode of expression, by no other comparison or image, could this truth have been more vividly expressed, or more emphatically affirmed; and it is this, of course, which I shall now consider. It is the essential Permanence of the Divine Law, and, as connected with this, the essential Supremacy of the whole Moral System above the Material, which I would bring as a reality to your

thoughts this morning.

My first remark is, in connection with it:

I. THAT THE PRINCIPLES OF THE DIVINE LAW ARE ESSENTIALLY PERMANENT: ARE PERMANENT AND IMMUTABLE IN THEIR OWN NATURE.

That they are principles of truth and of rectitude, need not be argued. They are recognized as such, by the Conscience in the soul. They are shown to be such, by the fact that God proclaims

them. They are established as such, by the express and manifold

declarations of Scripture.

And as the principles of Right and Truth, they are, in their very nature, unchangeable and everlasting. This is a point which it is difficult, perhaps, to prove; but only because in the effort to prove it is involved its assumption. It is, of course, impossible to construct an argument for any purpose, which shall not presuppose, as its primary basis, the reliableness of reasoning. But manifestly no reasoning can be reliable, unless the principles of truth are permanent and immutable; unless they are fixed, not arbitrarily, by a decree from without which is liable at any time to be revoked, but inherently, as in their nature eternally the same. So, too, it is impossible to judge the attributes of Right, without assuming its existence, as an absolute verity, to which these attributes indissolubly pertain; and thus we cannot demonstrate its eternity, without tacitly presupposing it. In relation to the proposition announced, therefore, it is as true as it seems paradoxical, that the difficulty of proving it is an evidence of its truth. It is not to be established by argument, simply because it is a primary fact, lying back of all argument, and to be practically assumed in order to furnish a foundation for argument.

But though we may not logically demonstrate the absolute permanence of the Truth and the Right, we have evidence of that permanence which is entirely conclusive. And that evidence is, in part, the immediate cognizance of the fact by the soul, and its more full and clear perception and more decisive affirmation of it, as it rises in nobleness, becomes more open and alive to spiritual impression, and more conversant with the Truth whose nature it considers. It is the prerogative of the soul, not merely to reason correctly from established premises, but at certain points to rise thus above reasoning, in the establishment of its premises; and to perceive intuitively those axioms in thought, those principles of truth, which precede argument, and in their nature transcend it; which, though

beyond the grasp of the mere understanding,

"Are yet the fountain-light of all our day, Are yet a master-light of all our seeing."

And in relation to these truths, the decision of the soul is as thoroughly to be trusted, it is as implicitly relied upon in practical concerns, as when its conclusions are the result of an obvious analysis. Indeed, its belief in these truths seems higher, even, and more affirmative, than in any others; because it partakes of the nature of vision, as distinguished from conviction; because in its perception of these, the soul acts, if we may so express it, in the totality of its powers; not merely in the use of the argumentative understanding. It is thus, for example, with the indestructible belief of the soul in its own personality; a belief out of which it cannot be forced, which is absolute knowledge more than belief, and yet which is not

the result of any process of reasoning, and for which it can scarcely give a reason when that is asked. It is thus, too, with its belief in the reality of moral distinctions and moral obligation. And it is thus with its belief in the inherent reality, and the unchangeable permanence, of the Truth and the Right. It is not a prejudice of the soul, which leads it to feel this. It is not any previous education, that it has unconsciously received. Certainly it is not an unsuspected pressure of its inherited depravity. Its perception of the fact is intuitive and immediate. It believes it, because it cannot but believe it; because it sees it to be true; because the conviction of its truth is made irresistible by its own constitution.

This, therefore, is one of the points at which all candid and thoughtful minds meet in agreement, whatever have been their differences of culture, or the peculiar aspects of their previous history. All feel, the educated and the ignorant, the aged and the immature, even the virtuous and the vicious-all feel, when the point is distinctly presented to them, and except as they have previously been biassed against it—that there is an Absolute Truth which can never become Error, and an Absolute Right which can by no agency be transmuted into Wrong. They know, when they think of it clearly, that a truth is in its nature, eternally, a truth; not dependent for its truthfulness upon outward circumstances, nor upon any, even Divine, appointment; but a truth always, and everywhere, because a truth inherently and by nature; and that no events can ever occur, and no exertion of power can ever be made, which shall falsify a principle that is true in itself. The axiom, for example, in mathematics, that the whole is greater than the part, or that the equals of a given quantity are equal to each other; or the proposition in morals, that the same act cannot at the same time be wholly right and wholly wrong, or that it is not possible at the same moment to love supremely two objects of regard, essentially diverse; these principles, and such as these, it is universally felt, must be always true. They do not depend for their truth on any appointment, and no power in the universe could change them into error.

And the same is characteristic of the principles of Right. A particular volition, or exertion of force, may of course be right at one time and wrong at another; because at one time performed with one motive and for a particular end, and at another time with another motive and for a different end. But the principles of Right, and the great duties to which these principles give rise, toward God and toward his creatures, are ALWAYS THE SAME. They cannot change. They are independent, entirely, of outward events. Their rightness is inherent, and universal. Across all boundaries of space or time, their obligation sweeps. They grow out of the nature of things. They are involved in the primary laws of Being itself. They have their origin in the same eternal necessities, which constitute the ground of the existence of Deity;

and they are, therefore, themselves immutable and everlasting; not dependent for their authority on any enactment, and not to be reversed by any decree. Their authority extends to all moral beings, as such; to the Creator himself, as truly as to the creature. To deal justly, to love mercy, in all things to regard the truth and to maintain equity—this, with reverence be it said, it is right for God himself to do. It is so independently of his volition, and has been so eternally; and it would be wrong for him to refuse it. And it is just the glory of his character, not that he makes that right which was not so before, or that by his election he has sovereignly divided the right from the wrong, but that he has freely chosen the Right, which was so in itself, as the rule of his action; and has made it the rule for the action of his creatures.

And this, if we consider it carefully, is everywhere involved in Scripture. It is because the word of the Lord is true and good, that it endureth forever; i. e., of course, because it is conformed with the truth and penetrated by the goodness, which are changeless and absolute. It is because the ways of Jehovah are ways of righteousness,—because, in other words, they are agreeable to the rectitude which is perfect and everlasting,—that saints and angels rejoice in his sovereignty. And that in his character which fills with brightness the heavenly courts, and lifts into their loftiest anthems the hearts of Saints, is simply its immutable expression of

Before the worlds were, therefore, the Right was, and the Truth with it; coeval with God himself, the principles of his character and the guides of his action. No lapse of time impairs their perfectness. No reach of space surpasses their authority. They are invulnerable to assault. They have their roots in the very ground of Existence, and they cannot be changed by any power. And, literally, "it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than for one tittle of the law to fail." Though all animated existence should perish from the Earth, though life itself should cease throughout the universe, though all the bands of the Creation should be dissolved, and worlds and systems fly wildly into chaos,

rectitude and of truth.

"The bright sun be extinguished, and the stars Wander forth darkling in the eternal space, Rayless and pathless, and the icy earth Swing blind and blackening, in the moonless air,"

still would the principles of Right remain unchanged, through all mutations; eternal in themselves, and indestructible; and just as evident in their nature, and just as absolute in their sway, when other suns and systems, through other agencies, had risen in splendor upon the wreck of these.

And this brings me to my second remark, which is:

II. That THE ENACTMENT OF THESE PRINCIPLES UPON THE PART OF GOD, AS THE RULE OF CONDUCT FOR HIMSELF AND FOR HIS

CREATURES, is as permanent and unchangeable as are the principles themselves.

We may distinguish, evidently, and we must distinguish, between the principles of the law,—the principles of equity and truth developed therein,—and the Law itself as a specific enactment, enjoined for us, on the part of our lawgiver. The principles, as we have seen, are self-existent and immutable. We cannot, without absurdity, even conceive these to be changed. But it is entirely conceivable in itself, without reference to the character of God, that the expression of these principles, in the statute revealed, may be essentially changed. It remains to be considered, therefore, whether there is a liability to this; or whether the Rule of Conduct recognized by the conscience, and addressed to us in the Scriptures,—around which are summoned their promises and penalties, and to which is given the authority of Jehovah,—is also as changeless as the principles it enfolds.

And it is to just this point that the Saviour speaks, and this he decides by the announcement of the text. In this sense, also, the Law is permanent. It rests upon an appointment entirely immutable; and it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than for one tittle

of it to tremble or fail.

The certainty of this will become apparent, if we remember that the law embraces perfectly the principles of right, and that the character of the Deity is of unchangeable perfection. If the Divine Law were an imperfect embodiment of truth and equity, the very goodness and holiness of Jehovah would require its amendment. It would then be, not only wrong in itself, but mischievous in its influence; as even an earthly and local statute, if unjust, is always mischievous, within the circle of its effects. The high regard of God for his Creation, therefore, as well as his supreme regard for Right, would demand and necessitate a change in the law. That infinite goodness and wisdom, which hold the worlds upon their course, from age to age, without one jar or tremble in all their sweep, would never be satisfied with a spiritual law, wrong in its elements and destructive in its effect upon the moral creation. Its change or abolition would be as certain as his sovereignty. But, manifestly, precisely the reverse is true, the law being holy. As it expresses fully the principles of rectitude—as in itself, therefore, it is absolutely equitable, and in its influences unspeakably beneficent—both the holiness and the goodness of the Deity ensure its stability. Holiness, is regard for the Right considered in itself and its own nature, and aside from its tendencies to produce well-being. Benevolence, is regard for that wellbeing which Right produces; and which, as matter of fact, can only be permanently attained through its instrumentality. The two, obviously, are nowise incompatible. Rather, they are sympathetic and friendly, and intrinsically allied; and though properly distinguishable, they are naturally coincident. We see them manifested, both separately and in union, in the character of those who in this world are worthy of our regard. It is their immutable development, and their absolute union, in the character of Jehovah, which gives to that its highest grandeur—a grandeur in the comparison of which the sublimity of God's Eternity is poor and low. God is "glorious in holiness." He is infinite, also, in mercy and in goodness. He loves the Right for its own sake; for its inherent and ineradicable beauty; for its eternal excellence; -and to the maintenance of that Right, and the advancement of its interests and the securing of its triumph, he cheerfully sacrifices all transient interests. Yet he loves also the welfare of the Universe, and for it he makes constant exertion; for it he gave his Son to die, and puts forth mightily his whole omnipotence. And he sees clearly, in his omniscient vision searching all things, how closely this wellbeing so precious in itself, is bound up with the Right so excellent and authoritative; how absolutely inseparable the two are; and how immutably it is certain, that only as equity is maintained can welfare be secured; that only as holiness prevails will happiness go with it. And therefore, in every aspect, he loves His Law, which is the Expression of the Right, and the Instrument of the Welfare; and in the obedience of which lie holiness and peace.

He loves, and will maintain it.

In relation to these its elements, of holiness and goodness, the character of the Deity is altogether unchangeable. His very power and Godhead are not more permanent. It is not possible for him to lie. He is not compelled, indeed, to be holy, by any external necessity. He is not shut up to benevolence in spite of himself. For such a conception would be as self-contradictory and as inherently absurd, as it would be derogatory to the glory of his character. His holiness is a voluntary holiness. His goodness is an attribute of his Will, which is inherently free. And yet the certainty of their continuance is not susceptible of increase. It is not apparent to us, even, how any motive can be presented to God for deviation from rectitude! how any temptation to malevolence can be felt in his bosom! But whether this be so or not, the certainty is entire of his unchangeable purity. His very nature involves it. The Scriptures most clearly and frequently declare it. And it is not more certain that his existence is limitless, than that his character will retain its original glory; will be pervaded and signalized by love and holiness, throughout eternity. The power that fills with worlds the infinite void, shall be controlled through all its stretches by boundless love. The knowledge to which Immensity is present, and all the past, and all the future; we in our ignorance; the insect of a day that flutters by us; the very clods beneath our feet; and all the infinite ranks of Principalities and Powers, ascending from us,-by which all acts are noted, and through which all thoughts are visible to God; this knowledge, so measureless and incomprehensible, shall, through eternity be only the minister of a holiness, before which angels shall bow and veil their faces. There is a Temple standing eternally in Heaven; and "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of Hosts." will be ever the song of the Seraphim therein. There are harps strung upon the sea of glass, and from them shall be poured forever the same triumphant anthem: "Just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of Saints." We lift ourselves into a realm of thought, from which the eye flies out into the limitless expanses of the eternal Future; and still we see therein only the beauty of God's Goodness, the glory of his Truth, streaming across, and spreading up, and filling with their light the infinite Concave. Taking our stand upon that jutting crag which Inspiration shows, lifting its head in the Hereafter, around which are dissolving elements, stars falling from their places, and these our heavens all vanishing in the flame; -still, as we look before us, we see goodness and holiness, serenely beautiful, sublimely radiant; and to our listening ear, from out the furthest recesses of the interminable Future, the echo that comes up is one of PRAISE.

Here, then, we see the Permanence of the Law! Not only are its principles immutable in themselves, but as a distinct enactment, ordained by our Sovereign as our rightful Rule, its authority is unchangeable, and its dominion everlasting. It was given in the holiness of Jehovah; and while that holiness abides, it will remain. It is sustained and enforced by his boundless goodness; and till that goodness becomes malevolence, its dominion cannot fail. Through all eternity, therefore, it will be still GOD'S LAW! amended by no addition, superseded by no revocation. The heavens and the earth may pass away. In the progress of ages, they must depart; for in themselves they have no life, and when God's purpose in them has been accomplished, they vanish of necessity. The whole material System shall roll together as a scroll; for it is all constructed for a specific end, and when that end is realized its mission is fulfilled. Vast, therefore, as are the periods of its duration, they are not inviwire. Laboriously as we must struggle up, to comprehend the almost measureless expanses through which they shall endure, still do these sink into the utterest insignificance, into the littleness of a day, beside that absolute ETERNITY through which God's Moral Law shall still abide—coeval in its principles with the existence of Deity, ooeval in its enactment with the Immortality of the Soul. Oh! in the light of this, we scarcely need the declarations of the Scripture; we know, almost beforehand, from the nature of the Law and from the character of Jehovah, "that the word of our God shall stand forever:" that "though the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, the Salvation of God shall be forever, and his Righteousness shall not be abolished." "It is easier-verily, it is EASIER-for heaven and earth to pass, than for one tittle of the Law to fail."

And now, there are two or three thoughts suggested by the sub-

ject. It shows us, first, what is the highest department in the Divine Government.

It is the MORAL. It is that in which this perfect and immutable Law is perfectly applied, by a holy Sovereign, to spiritual beings. In this, the ends proposed are in themselves the highest; the interests involved, of greatest magnitude; the means employed, most diverse and most noble; and the manifestations made, of power and knowledge as well as of wisdom and goodness, most various and sublime. Creation, rightly considered, necessarily implies only the putting forth of adequate force. Connected with it there may be, as there have been in our material system, most signal displays of skill and goodness; and yet the objects affected, if we may so express it, are gross and passive; the means employed are absolutely simple; the ends attained are for a time. But in the Moral government of Jehovah-that government whose Law the Saviour was describing—the subjects affected are spiritual beings, free and immortal; the agencies employed, are agencies of motive, and means of grace and spiritual influence; the requisitions made, on every moral attribute, are far more large; and the ends to be attainedthe maintenance of the Right, the bringing of all beings to its joyful obedience, and thus the highest well-being of the moral Creation, and the sublimest manifestation throughout its limits of the glory of Him who made and who upholds it—these ends are in their nature transcendent, and in duration endless. Here, then, we find the highest department in God's Administration. To this, creation and providence are both subordinate. He has created the universe. he now controls it, that through his moral government—in its administration of perfect law-its interests may be secured, the Right maintained, his Glory shown. On this, as the prime end, God's view is fixed. To this all other things are incidental. And in connection with this, will be most fully developed the whole stupendous resources of the Godhead.

What light, my friends, does this fact shed upon the Miracles of the Scripture! The Infidel has said, they are not credible; and has striven to prove it. But when we remember that all the laws of nature are but the expressions of God's free will, and all are but subordinate conditions to his Moral administration,—how credible it is, how almost even to have been anticipated, that at particular points the usual laws should have been suspended, the usual modes of action have been departed from, for the more perfect attainment of higher ends! He who thus thoughtfully considers the method of God's system, will find no difficulty in the belief of Miracles. It is the steadfast base, on which the historical argument should rest its

what a view is presented, too, by our present thought, of the nature and value of the Material System! It is not in itself an end, but merely the means to the attainment of an end higher than it—a necessary incident in the Divine administration. It is the

scaffolding to an invisible Temple, rising within. It is the body, important only from its relation to the Soul. As a means, it is most admirably fitted to the accomplishment of its purpose. In its construction and arrangement, have been most signally displayed the wisdom of God, and his boundless benevolence. Yet it is only a means. Filled as it is with the trophies of God's omnipotence, -crowded at every point with evidences of the skill conjoined with love, that not alone hold every system to its appointed path, but that line the sea-shell with its pearly enamel, that shed upon the insect's wing its Tyrian dyes, that rear in beauty the tiniest flower that feels the light and drinks the dew,—noble and beautiful as is the entire System, with all the mighty forces that work unceasingly within it, the laws of harmony that build and mould its fair proportions, the almost infinitude of space across which it extends, the vastness of the periods through which it shall endure,-it is still only as the home of moral beings, the theatre of moral action, the scene and realm of Moral Law, that it becomes of worth! Its laws, its forces, its whole adjustment and constitution, are but the means to this. For this, through the long reach of ages, the mighty agencies of flood and fire have fitted it for man. For this, the granite bars sustain its surface. For this, the power of God sweeps it unerringly around the sun. The light rests on it sweetly, that Man may act beneath its beams. The atmosphere enwraps it, the heavens spread over it their vast expanse, the showers descend upon it in their season, the singing birds find homes among its branches,-that Moral Beings, made in God's image, and subject to his law, may here act freely, developing their character, choosing their course. And when the end is gained, the power that holds it on its poise will be withdrawn. When all the moral beings for whom God fitted it have lived upon it, and freely acted, and passed away, his hand will simply sink from beneath it, and all its wondrous mechanism, 'like the baseless fabric of a dream,' will melt into forgetfulness.

Oh, then, how vain to love the Earth, as if its worth inhered within it! as if it were of its own nature permanent! as if it were not all an outward stage for the development of character—a needful increase.

DENT to God's great plans!

Again, and secondly, our subject shows us what is the Ruline Purpose and Aim of God in his Moral Administration. It is, the maintenance of the Law; the subjugation or the destruction of all opposing forces; and the establishment of its principles, throughout the creation, as the supreme and constant rule of moral action. To this, as we have seen, the goodness and holiness of God both pledge him; his regard for the highest well-being of his Creation, and his love for the Right, which shines out in the Law. It is not more certain, therefore, that all the other departments of his government will be subordinate to the Moral, than it is that in the Moral, this purpose will be supreme: to establish the Law, and give

it supremacy;—and that not only the agencies of creation and providence, but all the means specifically appropriate in Moral govern-

ment, will be subordinate to this.

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And looking from this point, we see, my friends, the reason and the need of the tremendous PENALTIES denounced in Scripture against transgression. There is nothing vindictive or arbitrary in them. They do not show excited passion upon the part of God, or any, the slightest, disregard of the happiness of his subjects. But they show clearly, with unmistakable distinctness, and with unspeakable impressiveness, his love for the Law. They show how certainly he is bent upon maintaining that, as not alone commanding and sublime in its inherent rightness, but as essential, and absolutely, to the well-being of the Creation. They show, too, his knowledge of the power of sin; and of the fearful tendencies to its commission which lie, dormant but living, in every human breast, and which are ready, at any touch of temptation, to spring at once into development and dominion. It is a mark, therefore, of God's benevolence, not less than of his holiness, that he has fixed these penalties as the reward of the transgressor; that by their mighty pressure, he may hold back the bursts of human guilt. It is his infinite wisdom—oh! let us all remember this—it is the wisdom and love of God, that not alone give power to obey to every moral being, and furnish motive for that obedience, and entreat to its exercise, and show the beauty of its spirit as manifest in Christ, and the glory of its Recompense, as dimly shadowed forth in the Apocalyptic imagery,-but that also, to all this, still superadds the warning of the doom of the rebellious; still shows an anguish as endless as the glory; still matches the palaces of Heaven with prisons of Despair; and brings to view, not only the sea of pure gold as of transparent glass, but also the sea of blackness, inwrought with fire, from which are borne upon the ear the sounds of wailing! Truly, my friends, laying aside all low and narrow views, which merely embrace the relations of punishment to individual transgressors, and raising ourselves in thought in some degree to the majesty and the reach of the Divine Administration,—how perfectly in harmony with all its course are these denunciations perceived to be! and how imperfect, without them, would have been the manifestation of God's benevolence!

And in the light of this same thought,—that God's great purpose in moral government must be the maintenance of the law, and the securing of its supremacy,—what views are opened of the ATONEMENT, by Christ? He died, to reconcile the maintenance of the Law with the forgiveness of the sinner; not to destroy the law, but to establish and fulfil it; not to condemn the world, but that the world, condemned already, through Him might live. For aught that we can say, it might have been possible for God, in the nature of things, to save the sinner without redemption; but he could not have done it consistently with the great purpose and end of his

administration; with that establishment of the Law for moral beings in which his goodness and holiness alike are involved. The work of Christ was therefore needful; to manifest the excellency of the law, and its claims upon our obedience,—and thus to establish and ratify its authority, and to display the righteousness of its Divine Executive,—before transgression could be forgiven. He did this by his life of holiness. He did it by his obedience unto Death; by

his sacrifice of Himself, upon the cross of Calvary.

And is it too mysterious, that God should have thus become incarnate? Is it incredible, inconceivable, that Christ has died to make Redemption? If it were by itself, an isolated fact, a fragment in the universe, without relations to God's System, grant that it would be. Yet when we see how indispensable it was, both as a basis of pardon for sinners, and as a means of influence over them; how absolutely it was needful, for the attainment of every highest end in Moral Government, -the vindication of the law, the rescue of the sinner, and the full exhibition of God's essential glory, of holiness and of love; and then, when we remember how absolutely supreme is this department in His whole empire, how everything else is subordinate to his moral administration; -what wonder is there even in this Unspeakable Transaction! What marvel, that such stupendous agencies were then invoked! If God's creative power were put forth freely, to furnish merely the scene of moral action, to raise the arena on which there might go forward the processes of his government—if even in this initiatory step the whole magnificent array of worlds and systems were summoned from nothing, and marshalled upon chaos till all the sons of God, catching their harmonies, shouted for joy; what wonder, that in the crisis of that government, and its high exigency,-when all its ends seemed liable to be lost, the law be unobeyed, the happiness of the race remedilessly destroyed,—that then the wisdom and power of God were all evolved, in this stupendous act, the grandest it may be in even Celestial history, to save and carry forward the mighty System!

Oh, if we think rightly of God, as not alone Creator and Preserver, but also Moral Governor; as sitting upon his throne of holiness, and judging the earth in equity and in love—if we think rightly of this his moral government, as having for its end the maintenance of his law and its complete establishment, the welfare of his creatures, and his own glory; to which creation and providence are both subordinate, to forward which, when they are needful, the most mysterious agencies will be combined:—then, my friends, we have found the Key that opens to us the mystery, not of the material universe alone, but also of revelation; that shows the deep significance and solemnity of human life; that gives its meaning and its moral to every star that glitters as a jewel upon the brow of night; that shows the Punishment of the future most wise and good; and makes that Roman cross on which Christ hung, the Centre and the

Pillar of God's whole system.

Again, therefore, and finally, our subject shows us the Guilt and folly of Breaking this Law of God, and of Rejecting Christ's Atonement.

To break the Rule of Conduct ordained of God for moral beings involves guilt, not merely because that is established upon God's appointment, and we are bound to obey Him, but because its principles are right in themselves, and right immutably; and their perfect development, in the conduct and character, is the indispensable condition of the well-being of the universe. To violate these, therefore, is to strike a blow at the centre and source of all well-being; "to jar 'gainst nature's chime;" and to send abroad, through all the circle of its effects, discord instead of order, confusion and chaos instead of beauty. Against an act like this, the Conscience remonstrates the more emphatically as it is educated more thoroughly. Over it angels, seeing its nature, and following out in part its influences, must mourn and weep. And God Himself, comprehending it fully, and seeing in his omniscience its furthest

issues, must infinitely abhor it.

And it is perilous, as well as guilty; perilous to a degree that makes its intelligent commission, by a spiritual being, seem little short of atheism or of insanity. For the Law which is here broken, is not only the most permanent, but in itself the principal and highest law, the Ground Law, so to speak, of the whole universe; the law, to which all others are subordinate; the maintenance of which is God's first purpose, and whose full execution is just as certain as His omnipotence. We plunge the hand into the flame, and it will We step from off the precipice, and we are crushed in We take into our system the deadly poison, and life the descent. itself is burned up by it. But in the Law of God, distinctively so called,—in that great moral law of which the Saviour spoke, which now pervades the system, which shall outlast it,—there is a deeper reality, a higher certainty, than in any of these; yes, than in all combined! The natural law may be suspended; the moral, cannot. A miracle might snatch us, conceivably, from physical destruction; but miracles, themselves, shall only sustain, illustrate, and enforce the Law of God. When we break this, therefore—aside from Christ, and His redemption-we make our own destruction cer-We call against us that whole collected might, that built the Universe to be the scene of its supremacy. And there is nothing else so certain, as that, for that transgression, we shall be punished; and all the Penalty of the Law be visited on us. In Christ, then, is our only hope! He is the one, the sole Deliverer! For Law, as such, knows no release; and God, as governor, can be but its executive; there is no other atonement but that of Christ; and "heaven and earth shall pass, before one tittle of the law shall fail."

Oh, then, shall we neglect the Saviour? Because we do not see the Law in actual operation, shall we esteem it null? Because it is restrained for a time in execution, by God's gracious decree, and does not catch us upon the instant in its tremendous grasp, shall we flatter ourselves that it is all Advice? that as a Law, it will not be enforced? that it has passed away, perhaps, already? and we, though setting ourselves unflinchingly against it, are in no danger? in need of no Redemption? From such insanity, my friends, may God deliver us! And while he shows us the Law, its permanence and supremacy; and while he shows us Christ, the Saviour before the Law for all who trust him—may we give up our pride; be swetly led unto the Lamb of God; accept him as our Redeemer, and thus be justified through Him; robed in the righteousness of Faith; made subject to the Law, and the recipients of its promise; and fitted, when Heaven and Earth have passed away, and all the Material System has crumbled as a vesture, still to exult in our obedience, and still to triumph in its dominion!

commended in the contract to the contract of the contract of the further heart rand in a hele ablace. And his prile at a degree that makes. twide all if you are a little is not a commence of the state of the st of atheirs or as tuendity. I on the saw which is here broken, by not only the read personept, but in ball the ar west and plotted law the Grand Law, so to seek of the all and real laws. to which who could be a server and the server and the server and the server as the ser as minters as time a new comment of the comment included His opening care. We present the death of the flower test of will store and the self-store and the self-stor the property of the property of the property of the property and the mades began are at the large test of the districtive of the not be spine from and law of which its serious suchs, which new percentage of printing and the latest its and the statest and all the statest and the stat the mi must you resait to you mi man a series you a many ministree. The same low may be exercised; the moral canof their level of the contest of the physical debas strateffi distas vigaticis soli of the contract of the contrac min. We can at a first whole collected reight that built the Carrers to be the second its seprement. And there is no ching class of your last that they come one into the shall be passed in the standard of the Law te visited on its. In brid, then, is correct layed it in the one, the sale Belivery! and present the titles of no other after port but that of Clotha; and " here a year earth shall pure, before one tatle of the law shall

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#### RESPONSIBILITY OF ENJOYING THE CHRISTAIN MINISTRY.\*

#### BY REV. GARDINER SPRING, D. D.,

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It is not easy to estimate the debt of gratitude which those portions of the earth owe to the distinguishing goodness of God, who enjoy the stated ministrations of his word. The Christian ministry is among the selectest blessings which can be enjoyed by men; one of the most important elements of individual, social, and national prosperity. It is the institution which, above all others, makes Christian lands what they are, girds them with a zone of light, and sheds upon them the balmy influences of heavenly mercy.

"What nation," said Moses to ancient Israel, "is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous, as all this law which I set before you this day?" This was the pre-eminence of the Hebrew state; they were a better instructed and better governed people, a holier and happier people, than any of the surrounding nations. The God of Abraham was a "glory in the midst of them, and a wall of fire round about them." There he set his "tabernacle for a shadow in the day-time from the heat, and for a covert from storm and from rain." Speaking of the restoration of that backsliding and chastised people, after days of darkness and rebuke, God himself says to them, "Turn, O backsliding Israel, for I am married unto you; and I will take you one of a city and two of a family, and I will bring you unto Zion. And I will give you" -what is the gift that the greatest of all givers will give to his restored and re-espoused people?—"I will give you Pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding." The Psalmist, in speaking of them, says, "Blessed are the people who know the joyful sound; they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance." If this pre-eminence was enjoyed by the Jewish people, under a comparatively dark and shadowy dispensation, with how much stronger propriety does it belong to Christian lands, enjoying, as they do, so much clearer light, and that "better covenant, founded upon better promises?"

This is not a subject on which the Scriptures speak in doubtful

<sup>\*</sup> Transferred, by permission of the publishers, from the "Power of the Pulpit."

or unemphatic language. They tell us of the gifts of God to men; above all others do they magnify his "unspeakable gift," the gift of his only and well-beloved Son. They speak, too, of the gifts which his Son bestows, as the rewarded and rewarding Mediator; gifts which he purchased by his death, and of which he is the honored dispenser. When he ascended up on high, "he gave gifts to men," worthy of his royal bounty, and such as he himself selected as the most fitting and striking expressions of his munificence on his first accession to his mediatorial throne. "He gave—some, Apostles; and some, Prophets; and some, Evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry."

These are the gifts he bestows on us. The "lines have fallen to us in pleasant places, and we have a goodly heritage." We may glory in the vastness of our territory, and in the rapid growth of an enterprising population; we may survey with high and honest exultation the blessings of that civil and religious liberty which we have received from our fathers; but if we are not recreant to the trust committed to us, and feel as they felt, we shall prize the Christian ministry. Amid all the beautiful and varied scenery which delights our eye as we look over this broad land, we shall not overlook her ten thousand churches; and amid all our delighted exultation, we shall remember it is written, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!

Privilege and obligation are but correlative terms. The greater the privilege, the greater the duty, and the greater the sin of leaving it unperformed. We ask more for the pulpit, than that it be provided with a pious and well-educated ministry; and we ask more for the ministry, than that it should receive an adequate pecuniary support, and be respected and encouraged. We claim for it a practical regard of the truths it inculcates, and the duties it enforces. We ask for it that character, those hopes, and those efforts

which it was instituted to attain and advance.

The first great duty which the pulpit urges, is "repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ." It holds up the simplicity of the method of salvation by a crucified Redeemer;—the simplicity of a spiritual faith in Jesus Christ, in opposition to that righteousness which is by the deeds of the law; the simplicity of Christian worship, in opposition to the tedious and complicated observances of all false religions. The just expression and proof of its power is found, when those who enjoy its dispensations cordially receive this system of truth and grace, and confide in that Saviour through whom they are delivered from the curse of the law; whose blood answers every charge, covers every sin, enforces every plea, and itself pleads with irresistible power. Here lies the first and great responsibility of those who are favored with a Christian ministry. Men do not truly meet any one of its claims until

this duty is performed. Their obedience to the Divine authority begins here; it is vain for them to think of anything like conformity to his will, so long as they reject him whom God has sent, and refuse his instructions who comes to them with so many attestations of his divine mission. We call upon men, therefore, everywhere, to renounce their pretensions to self-righteousness,—to feel their sin and condemnation,—to be sensible of their inability to save themselves,—to be conscious that they have no claims, no merit, and to throw themselves upon him who is the Author and Finisher of this great salvation. We call upon them to feel that for any good purpose they have nothing, and need all things;—to bow at his footstool, who is so holy that the heavens are not clean in his sight; and there where archangels bow, and devils tremble, to smite upon their breasts, and say, "God be merciful to me a sinner!"

Whence is it that men listen to the message brought to them by the Christian ministry, with not half the interest and eagerness with which they listen to a lecture on themes of mere secular interest? A lecture on astronomy, or history, or some important department in the arts; a mere play at the theatre, or song at the opera. or a paragraph from the press, telling of battles lost or won, and treaties ratified or rejected, holds them in silent thought and admiration. But the lessons of God's redeeming love: the song that was first rehearsed by angels on the plains of Bethlehem; the treaty of peace between heaven and earth, signed with the name of the ever-blessed and adorable Trinity, and sealed with the blood of the Lamb,—whose eye sparkles, whose bosom glows at messages like these; and where are the voices that repeat these glad tidings? Bold operations in business interest them; the aged gather up their wandering and rouse their torpid thoughts, and the young take fire at the doubtful enterprise; -but tell them of durable riches and righteousness, of heavenly gems and diadems brighter than Gabriel wears, and they make light of it; it is tame—to listen to it is a task.

What miserable,—what guilty delusion is this! I look around me, and see men following their different secular pursuits with all the ardor and zeal they are capable of exercising. Difficulty and dangers do not discourage them, but rather give energy to their efforts; they are not phantoms and trifles that they are pursuing, but realities. But there is one thing about them all which they have forgotten, and that is, their uncertainty. They "know not what shall be on the morrow." They are eagerly grasping the "greatest, the most slippery uncertainties." This is a remarkable fact in the history of man. There is but one certain event in all his future course. Be he high or low, rich or poor, learned or unlearned, happy or miserable, young or old, the friend of God, or his enemy; there is not one among all the millions of our race, who can, with certainty, anticipate any other event in his future history.

save the single one, that he must die. But shut out this message of God's redeeming mercy, and what a fearful certainty is death! Peradventure his course may be serene and cheerful up to that hour of sadness; but there darkness overshadows him-terror agitates him—deep and heavy clouds settle over the gates of death, All beyond,—what is it? Yet is there a "clearing" even through this dark valley; a bright opening; a vista of the heavenly world. O there is everything in death to make us dread its approach, apart from those principles and hopes, which rise like the star of promise on the soul.

"Go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." The Ancient of Days, the Son of man, the Spirit of truth and grace in all their undivided love authorize this mission, and stand pledged to confirm the message which it bears. The words of men may be counsels of wisdom;—the words of God have the force of law. The words of men are of doubtful verity;—the words of God are truth. The words of men may be unaccomplished words; -God's counsel shall stand, and he will do all his pleasure. The heavens and the earth shall pass away, but his words shall never pass away. Wonderful as these truths are, gracious as they are, and tremendously fearful as they are, they are as unchangeable as the Deity; they are settled in heaven, and established forever. There is all the sincerity about them which belongs to the essence of truth and goodness; all the authority belongs to them which belongs to Infinite rectitude and Omnipotent justice. They are fixed and permanent as his throne; they will never be retracted, never altered; nor are they revealed in such a way as to stifle our hopes, or excite one needless fear. There is nothing wavering, nothing uncertain in relation to any one feature of this Gospel; come what will, it will stand in all its forms and colors, in all its promises, and in all its threatenings. Whether men receive, or reject it, it shall pursue its steady course, impelled by an unseen, but Omnipotent hand, and bring everlasting glory to its Divine Author.

How constraining the motive, then, to listen and obey when God thus addresses us! How solemn the admonition, "See that ve refuse not him that speaketh; for if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth; how much more shall not we escape, if we refuse him that speaketh from heaven!" There was binding authority in the message of the ancient dispensation; God was its Yet was it preparatory only to the one that "cannot be God "who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son." Were an angel from heaven to visit our world, we should crowd around him, and should be anxious to know the errand on which he came. Angels have descended in times far gone by, and men listened to their errand with astonishment. But their message was a very subordinate one to that

brought by the Son of God. "For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward, how shall they escape who neglect so great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him." We have the same testimony. Men disregarded the voice of God's prophets; they stoned some, killed sone; "yet having one Son, he sent him, saying, They will reverence my Son!" It is the Saviour's voice by whom this message is uttered. He bows his heavens and comes down. He walks amidst the golden candlesticks. When his ministers speak in his name, he is with them; when his people meet together, he is there. He will be sanctified in them that come night

him, and before all the people will he be glorified.

It is a solemn thought, too, that to those who reject this divine message, it is as though no real message had been revealed. We have spoken of the power of the pulpit, of the constituent elements of that power, and of the correlative obligations of its ministry; but what is all this to the man who disregards the message it brings? It is as though the pulpit had no power; nay, it is as though there were not a Christian pulpit in the world. It is as though there were no Sanctuary, no Sabbath, and no Gospel and all the light of these precious hopes were blotted out in the darkness of Paganism, and in the gloom of the grave. Shall it be thus? Shall the voice of nature demand these instructions, and shall that affecting cry for help be suppressed? Shall the pulpit win its ten thousand triumphs, through darkness, through trial, through enemies, through the faggot and the gibbet; and shall there be obduracy, more powerful than they all, that leaves the dwellers in Christian lands bound in chains to the ignominious car of sin and death? We have spoken of what the pulpit has done. Time would fail to tell of the millions whom it has made holy and happy. . They have lived in peace, and when death came, have lifted their eyes to the eternal hills whence cometh their help. Over a world strewed with the ruins of a thousand generations, this message of heavenly mercy has passed with a life-giving power, quickening them who were dead in sin, and raising them up to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

O the blessedness of this sweet hope in Christ! Just conceive of a man in the state of William Howard, so distressed by a view of his sins and danger, that he says, "So great was the anguish of my soul, that I lamented God had spared Noah and his family. O that they had been swept away by the Deluge; then I had never been!" And after he had become reconciled to God through Jesus Christ, speaking of his joy, he says, "My tongue, or pen, can faintly describe it. All the bliss that I had ever enjoyed, was no more like it than midnight darkness is like the meridian sun. It was heaven indeed; something of the real nature of heaven I then enjoyed. My soul was wrapt in the embraces of the adorable Jesus, and I was so overpowered with holy love that I was lost to everything

else." It is related of the Countess of Huntingdon, that she was brought to the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus, through the instrumentality of the single remark of the Lady Margaret Hastings, that "since she had known and believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, she had been as happy as an angel." When the Sun of righteousness beams on the soul, sometimes rising like the faint light of the morning, and sometimes bursting upon the benighted mind in meridian splendor, joys visit it that are alternately serene and rapturous, now tranquil, and now unspeakable and full of glory.

The brightest earthly career has its trials, and they are trials which find no relief and no alleviation but from the Divine presence and favor. Here alone is the febrifuge for the burning heart; the

pillow for the aching head.

"How soft to lean on Heaven!
To lean on Him on whom archangels lean."

This world forsakes us on the approach of the winter's storm; before the chill blasts of adversity it retires. Not so the religion of the Gospel. Misery in all its forms has peculiar attractions for this message of heavenly mercy. The spirit of the world and the spirit which is of God often meet at the door of human wretchedness; but the former leaves it because the sources of its joy are dried up; the latter enters because there are sources of bitterness, and tears to be wiped away. Such love and pity are found in the Gospel of Christ, and only there, for misery and poverty like ours. Not until this celestial messenger is made welcome, can men be holy, or happy. The voice of reason, the voice of conscience, the voice of God, every cross and disappointment, and trial repeats the call, "My son, give me thy heart!" And O that, from that insatiable thirst for happiness so deeply implanted in the soul of man, every one of my readers may respond, My heart, blessed Lord, will I give!

But there is another alternative. "He that is not with me," says the Lord Jesus, "is against me." Those who reject this message of the Christian ministry, do so on their own responsibility, and at their own peril. "If thou be wise, thou shalt be wise for thyself; but if thou scornest, thou alone shalt bear it." Men who have been distinguished for the success which crowned their labors, have also been distinguished for making hard hearts harder, and blind eyes blinder. There is a reason for this in the nature of their message; for the very truths which are most fitted to interest and impress, when long and perseveringly rejected, only leave the mind more obdurate. This is the way men become ripe for destruction; it is in the midst of scenes of mercy, where they wander as in a desert and parched land, and whence they go at last, where there is not a drop of water to cool their tongue. This is the direful catastrophe. This will be the end of disregarding and rejecting the message of the Christian ministry. As God liveth, this will

be the mournful end of rejecting these messages of heavenly mercy. It is no common responsibility that such men incur. If the smallest talent must be accounted for, what account must they render who all their lifetime have been favored with a preached Gospel, and who have only heard and rejected this gracious message? How bitter the reflections of such a man, as he sees the last hours of human life passing away, and the lamentation is extorted from his bosom, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and I am not saved!" What a fearful transition will that be from the Christian sanctuary to the bar of God! There will be mourning then, when "many shall come from the east and from the west, and from the north and from the south, and sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of God, and they themselves are cast Ah, they know not what they do, to whom God has given a faithful ministry, and who reject the great salvation. They are not the atheist, and the infidel, and the immoral only who perish. Large and free as it is, the love of God is no refuge even for the moral and the orthodox, who treat the message of his ministers as they treat their Master, and tread it under their feet. It is the last message. Infinite love makes its greatest effort here. It cannot

do more. "There remaineth no more sacrifice for sin."

When the rich man in the parable lifted up his eyes in hell, and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom, he cried and said, "Father Abraham have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame!" The time will come when the despisers of our message will cry for mercy, whether they ever did before or not. They will cry long and loud; they will lift up their voice in awful distress; but there shall be none to answer. Nor will it be long before that day of calamity shall come. It may be forty years; it may be twenty; it may be ten; it may be five; it may be two; it may not be one. Eternity is nearer than they think of, and that place of torment is as near as eternity. We know not what a day may bring forth. Yesterday is fled upon the eagle wings of time; to-morrow belongs to God and not to man. These golden Sabbaths will soon have passed away, and the voice of the living ministry will soon be silent among the silent dead. Could those who die in their sins come back again and live, its message would not be so urgent. But they come not. You call, and they You look for them in the visions of the night; answer not again. but it is all a dream. They appear not to mortal eyes; they speak They are not in heaven, but are shut up in not to mortal ears. Would that the man who rejects the salvation of God could be transported to eternity for an hour, if it were but to witness the agony of those who once occupied a place in God's sanctuary, and whom nothing could induce to fall in with the redemption that is in Christ Jesus! O dreadful doom! not to be described by mortal tongue; yet to be endured by every mortal man that refuses this

offered mercy!

If the writer dwells a moment longer on thoughts like these, it is because they are affecting thoughts to his own mind, as a preacher of the everlasting Gospel. The Christian ministry is God's selected instrumentality in accomplishing his purposes of grace. It is set for the defence of the Gospel, and for the vindication of the Divine government over this fallen world. Eternity alone can disclose the responsibility of preaching this Gospel; eternity alone can disclose the responsibility of rejecting it. Think of a man sitting for ten, or twenty, or forty, or sixty years under the varied influences of an instructive pulpit. What a vast amount of truth has he listened to! How much toil and ingenuity have been expended in order to frame arguments to convince his understanding, to construct appeals that should rouse his conscience, to furnish illustrations that might interest him, and to urge motives that might persuade him to become reconciled to God! How often has he trembled at the rebuke, and wept under the affecting persuasions that would fain have constrained him to become a Christian! Who can measure the responsibility of such a man, even though he may have listened to the meanest pulpit in the land! That pulpit, what will be the testimony, and what his recollections of that pulpit, when the Saviour there made known shall judge the world in righteousness! What a stream of light has poured from it upon many a benighted mind, which, if it had enlightened Sodom and Tyre, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes!

Men who enjoy a faithful Christian ministry know too much of God and his Christ, to consent to go away into everlasting burnings. Better for them to have died from the womb, or as a hidden, untimely birth that had not been, as infants which never saw the light, than to have been dwellers in this world of mercy, and at last make

their bed in that lake of fire.

Behold, ye despisers, and wonder and perish! Adore, ye lovers of God and the Gospel of his Son, that by the foolishness of preaching he is pleased to save them that believe!

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#### BECOMING ALL THINGS TO ALL MEN.

#### BY REV. WILLIAM ADAMS, D.D.

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..... "I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means wave some."-1 Con. tr. 92.

Ir there be a passage in any language worthy to be compared, for the nobleness and sublimity of its sentiments, with the vindication which Paul has made of himself in this ninth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, we have not yet been fortunate

enough to discover it.

We cannot be insensible to the magnanimous bearing of Aristides "the Just," when defending his pure fame against the jealousy of his great rival Themistocles; deeply are our sympathies moved when we read of men like Galileo and Columbus, wronged and defrauded by those whom they had benefited, standing forth to repel aspersion, and vindicate their own names and achievements; infected with his own deep pathos are we all, when we read the words with which the Earl of Chatham stirred the British senate in defence of his life, spent in public service; against the attacks of men who could not, or would not, appreciate his motives; but not one of these signal passages in the history of forensic eloquence is equal to the chapter now before us, in which, under the necessity of self-defence, the Apostle to the Gentiles appeals to the principles and conduct of his disinterested and noble life.

He had been falsely accused by false men; who, by misjudging his motives and degrading his official character, sought to impugn and degrade Christianity itself; and the occasion demanded that he should step forth from the modest retirement, in which the conscious uprightness of his motives was left with God, and, by an explanation of his own principles, vindicate the spirit of Christianity as attacked in his person. Nor is that man to be envied, who can read this record of self-sacrificing benevolence, this devotion of oneself to hardship, and solitude, and toil, for the good of others, without the generous glow of enthusiastic admiration.

In the one verse which I have selected for my text, we have,

condensed into a few words, the object of his life, and the means by which he sought its attainment; which form of expression may serve to furnish the method to be pursued in the following discourse:—

I. THE OBJECT AND END OF this LIFE: "That I might by all means save some."

II. THE MEANS BY WHICH HE SOUGHT TO ACCOMPLISH HIS OBJECT: "I am made all things to all men."

The object of the Apostle's life was the salvation of his fellowmen. It is plain that he looked at the human race from a particular point of view. He was convinced that they were in

danger; and his desire was to rescue them.

There have been a great many ingenious representations of human life. The world has been described under a very great variety of images. Old Pythagoras, when he was asked what he thought of human life, compared it to the Olympic games, where some came to try their fortune for the prizes; some as merchants to exchange their commodities; some to make good cheer and meet their friends; and others, like himself, were simply lookers-on. Epictetus, another of the old philosophers, in a very striking paragraph, which has been con-fessedly employed by Mrs. Barbauld as the foundation of a very ingenious essay, compared the world to a great mart of commerce, where fortune exposes to our view many and various commodities, which we may procure by purchase or barter. Others have painted life as a voyage—the revolution of the seasons—a war—a race a school-and so on, through the whole range of metaphorical illustration. Far different was the view taken by the great Apostle. To his eye the world was a vast wreck, in danger of being broken up by the waters of a destroying deluge. Mankind were in imminent peril of being drowned in perdition; and he was running from point to point, making incredible exertions, if by all means he might save some. In the language employed by him at other times, the image, but not the idea, is somewhat varied. Instead of a drifting wreck, the world was as a house on fire, and its inmates in danger of being consumed in everlasting burnings. He shouts to the sleepers; he wakes them out of their slumbers; he rushes to the rescue, "pulling them out of the fire," that by all means he might save some. It is evident that he was thoroughly convinced of the fact that all mankind are in danger of eternal ruin. He cherishes no notion akin to the universal salvation of all his race. To him they do not appear to be floating quietly and securely towards a state of indiscriminate happiness. The sharp cry from his lips-If by all means I might same some—implies what he felt as to the exposure of all. like the wrecker pacing the shore, devising now this means, and now that, if by all he might, save a few out of the ship just ready to founder.

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to founder, Was this a just and correct view of the world? Was it the fancy of a maddened brain, or the vivid conception of truth and soberness? Whence did the Apostle acquire these peculiar sentiments? Was he a misanthrope, soured and moping? Was he a disappointed man, taking revenge upon the world, by maledictions, for his losses? When he first comes to our notice, a young man in high favor and popularity, a scholar trained in legal tactics, in repute with the priesthood and the people, he has none of those views of life which he subsequently possessed. He is first introduced in history as a persecutor, more intent on cruel slaughter than the salvation of his fellow-men. But a change passes over the whole spirit and tenor of his life. Scales fall from his eyes, and he is enlightened by the Spirit of God to discern new things concerning himself and the world. He feels that he is rescued from the bonds of iniquity and from the jaws of hell. Is he right in the judgment he now passes, that the world lieth in wickedness? Has he grown suddenly less pitiful, and more morose, than when he was hauling men and women to prison, compelling them to blaspheme the name of Jesus Christ? Has his theology just emerged from the cave, or descended in light from the skies? Here we are not left in doubt. The knowledge he had concerning God and his Christ came down from heaven; and the commission given to him at his conversion was to "go among the nations, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them who are sanctified by faith that is in Christ." Here was his theology. The race in their sins, and for sin forgiveness through faith in Christ, the Saviour. This is Christian theol-This is its characteristic in distinction from all speculations of philosophy, ancient or modern. It furnishes relief from an universal calamity. Whenever we use the familiar words, Saviour or salvation, we do, in fact, admit all that is declared concerning the lost condition of the human race. Jesus Christ came to seek and to save that which was lost. Paul learned to view the world as it was contemplated by his Lord and Master. Nor did he view it as a Fatalist or as a Stoic. He was touched by a more than mortal tenderness towards his fellow-men. His heart's desire and prayer to God in their behalf was, that they might be saved. He who was once ready to persecute unto blood, was filled with the compassion of his Lord, and animated with the hope of saving, at least, some. This now becomes the motive of his life. To behold men ready to perish, without relief, would have tortured him to despair; but there was a way of affording relief, and by the hope of success was he impelled to great exertions. No matter in whose presence he stood, whether the keeper of a jail, a soldier on guard, or a governor, king or emperor, his uppermost desire was to save that

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man's soul. Of himself he was forgetful, as men always forget themselves in the excitement of great endeavors for others. "I seek not yours, but you," was the explanation of all his peculiar intercourse with men. To publish the Gospel was a necessity laid upon him. "Woe is me if I preach not the Gospel." To preach the Gospel was his choice. He was impelled to it by the irresistible fervor of Christian love. Others might prefer other pursuits; one thing only remained for him. Preferment in church or state, wealth, learning; all which he himself, in common with others, had once counted as an excellency, seemed unto him now as the very filth of the earth; and were to be counted as loss, save as they bore upon the accomplishment of his grand purpose—the salvation of This is the key which explains the whole of his speeches. his travels, his self-denials, his remarkable life. He was an insane man, and nothing short of it, if there was not a reality and a reasonableness in the motive which governed him. It was not at Jerusalem only that men were exposed to the wrath of God; so he fled, as on angels' wings, to Arabia, to Ephesus, to Athens, to Rome, to Spain, to announce the news of a Saviour's mercy. The barbarians of Malta heard him; the Areopagites listened to him with solemn awe; the mariners of the stormy Adriatic were his auditors; those of Cæsar's household were told the tidings from his lips; well nigh every land and every city, from Spain to Arabia, had seen and heard this extraordinary man, who by all means hoped to save some. A hero he was, a hero he meant to be, but not as the world counts heroism. Might he not, says he, in this chapter, have taken a wife, if he had chosen? Might he not have received support from those to whom he preached? Was not this the law of God? But if he chose to forego domestic ease, and the support to which he was entitled, that he might the better perform his heart's desire, in saving lost men, were his motives for this to be misunderstood and impugned?

Do not suppose, dear brethren, that my purpose in this is to pronounce a panegyric upon the Apostle. I propose something far more practical than an encomium upon his noble conduct.

He has himself announced, in our text, what was the one end and motive of his life:—To save the souls of men. His whole life, as we have seen, subsequent to his conversion; was coincident with this motive. If he was sane and sober in this view of the world, and in this course of conduct, there is every reason why we should adopt and practise the same. No great change has passed of a sudden, upon the nature of man, to render obsolete and inappropriate the words of Jesus Christ: "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." And if the words of the Apostle, inspired by the Spirit of God, are to be received as a correct exponent of Christianity, then we too should look upon our fellow-men, as he did, in danger of being lost; and we too should be touched by the tender compassions of Christ, and animated by

apostolical fervor, if by all means we may save same. All other pursuits are to be held subordinate to this. Not that they are to be abandoned for the one employment of preaching the Gospel; but that they are to be prosecuted in reference to the same end and object which filled the eye of the Apostle. There is a value in those very objects which many pursue for selfish ends, beyond all which concupiscence and ambition ever dreamed. There is a value in gold and silver, beyond all that the most sordid miser ever imagined, as he drops the shining ore into his bags and boxes. There is a value in learning and knowledge above all that was ever imagined by any one who, stimulated by the mere ambition of excelling, has grown gray in midnight study. So of station, power, or influence of any kind; seeing that they may, and ought to be applied to the grand purpose of saving a lost world.

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II. But it is time that we pass to the next division of our subject, and consider the means by which the Apostle sought to accomplish the object which was his motive in life. He became all things to all men.

And here it will be necessary to make careful discrimination; seeing that what Paul here intended was instrumental in doing so great a service; while the words chosen to convey his meaning may be easily perverted, as indeed they have been by many, who wrest them to their own and others' destruction. Happily the discrimination is very easily made. What the Apostle actually intended is best understood from his own words. "For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; to them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak. I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. And this I do for the Gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you."-(Ver. 19-23.)

If there be a character in all the world which merits our unmitigated scorn and detestation, it is that of a man who, on important subjects, will trim and truckle in conformity with the company into which he happens to be thrown; who, in one position will give up his opinions, if he has any, to suit one class of people, and in another circle will maintain the very same, and that most strenuously, to suit others. Now, it is almost derogatory to the character of the noble-hearted Apostle to the Gentiles even to say, that his spirit and conduct bore no resemblance to such a mean and fawning sycophancy. Nor is there anything here in conformity with the doctrine of modern Jesuitism, that "the end justifies the means;" that because the object to be attained, to

wit, the salvation of men, was benevolent and of all things important, therefore it was lawful and proper to use all kinds of means to bring it about, even duplicity, fraud, and dishonesty. How strange the solecism! Nor do we mean that the Apostle had no opinions, no principles of his own, to which he attached importance, and which he felt himself bound to defend. All such associations with the conduct of this sincere, upright, and earnest man, do injustice to his language, his life, and his sacred fame.

Opinions he had; preferences he had; a definite creed and theology he had; opinions and faith, than which he would rather have surrendered his life. While this was so in reference to vital truths, other matters there were which were perfectly indifferent —indifferent to him, though not to others. The Jew held to opinions and practices to which he attached great importance, but which Paul had learned to regard as altogether trivial and unimportant. He, Paul, was not under the law of ritual observances; he had experienced a better thing than that, even Christianity. Christ had liberated him from that punctilious adherence to rites and letters, which was no better than servile. But freeman though he was, if he might the better secure the confidence and affection of the Jew, so as to save his soul, he would conform to Jewish customs and preferences, so far as he might without the compromise of principle. He was willing to make himself a servant to all, that he might gain the more. Just as a slave submits to all the whims and caprices of his master, unwarrantable though they be, so Paul, with Christian magnanimity, says that he was accustomed to forego his own opinions and preferences, and accommodate himself to the preference and prejudice of others, so far as could be done with a good conscience, that he might gain them to Christ. So again, when laboring among the Gentiles—described by him as those who were "without law," that is, being uninformed concerning the rites and ceremonies enjoined in the law of Moses -he tells them that they were perfectly right in omitting many things which were practised by the Jew. He does not insist upon circumcision; indeed he absolves them from it, declaring that the obligations to observe that, and other kindred rites, have been done away in Christ; they were no more binding as matters of authority or necessity at all, even though he himself, when among the Jews, had conciliated them by practising what was their preference, but to him a matter of indifference. Thus his consistency is made out-and more than consistency-a noble magnanimity; a superiority above all personal preferences and prejudices, and that for others' good. When he was at Lystra, he took Timotheus and circumcised him. He was among the Jews who regarded the rite as essential. He had been taught to believe that now it was nothing. Circumcision or uncircumcision, it was nothing, if we were in Christ. Howbeit, if the Jews could be conciliated and

won to Christ, by what was "no-thing" to him, happy was he to meet their wishes; telling them at the same time, that he did not attach the same importance to the rite with themselves. He gives up himself to be a servant to Jewish whims, caprices, and prejudices; but, observe, it is upon points which he pronounces to be indifferent. He would prefer that they should see things as he did; and should do as he did; but as they could not see with his eyes, and adopt all his sentiments, he will cheerfully relinquish his own preferences to their advantage. In this, how careful was he to violate no obligation, bend no principle, break no law, offend no . truth. He himself has interpreted in this parenthesis the declaration that all this pliant conformity was not as though he was without law to God; for "under law to Christ" he was; so that though he was flexible as a willow wand in his elastic and cheerful conformity to all the preferences and prejudices of Jew or Gentile, in things indifferent, he was ready to go to the cross in defence and testimony of those vital truths by which God was to be honored,

and the world could alone be saved. Understood in this sense, the conduct of the Apostle presents a rule of conduct of incalculable service to all who would seek to gain their fellow-men to Christ. If this motive to save men, be first in the mind; if it be distinct, intense, and earnest, it will vindicate the conduct from all those inconsistencies and meannesses which make up a selfish sycophancy. Christian pliancy, and unchristian conformity, are distinguished in two respects; as to what is surrendered, and the motive by which anything is surrendered. The selfish parasite flatters and yields, cringes and surrenders, that he may ingratiate himself, and obtain his own purposes. The Christian yields and conforms when he can, that he may save others. The one hopes to exalt himself, secure his own ends, and rise in favor with all. The other, forgetful of himself, gives up all he can, that he may win souls to Christ. The one surrenders everything, trifles. with matters the most sacred, counting no price too great to be paid for his ambitious ends; willing to sell his soul and his Saviour. The other, steadfast and unshaken in vital truth, displays a magnanimous indifference in all things immaterial and unimportant.

Bunyan has sketched the portrait of the one in Mr. By-Ends, in lines so bold and strong, that no one who has ever seen the face will ever forget it. He came from the town of Fair-Speech, and pretended to be on the way to the Celestial City. For kindred he had my Lord Turnabout, and Mr. Smoothman, Mr. Facing-both-ways, Mr. Anything; and the parson of the town was Mr. Two-tongues, and his great-grandfather was a waterman, looking one way and rowing another; and his wife was my lord Feigning's daughter, so remarkably well-bred that she knew how to carry it to all, even to prince and peasant. Here was a man who, in his own words, "jumped in his judgment with the present way of the times;" whose rule of

life was "never to strive against wind and tide; but seek to please everybody, for his own advantage." The portrait, we fear, does not belong to an old gallery. It is a lifelike representation of that worldly conformity which is practised in all times and places for one's private ends. Here it is, and thus it is, that many pervert this rule of apostolical conduct, this becoming all things to all men. They learn to do as others and be as others; but alas! it is not for others' good. Conform when you can consistently, innocently, if your motive be, as with the Apostle, to save the soul. But beware that you do not take fire into your bosom to be burned, rather than hold out a lamp to enlighten others in the way of life. If your motive be not like the Apostle's, your conduct will not be as his. If you become all things to all men, that they may be pleased with you by seeing what a high-minded, accommodating, easy, worldly Christian you are, the whole process is vitiated by a bad motive, which leads you to dishonor religion, deny Christ, and instead of saving, delude and mislead, by your inconsistency, many to destruc-There is a vast difference between the Apostle Paul and Cardinal Wolsey.

Another thing is implied in this rule of conduct we are now considering. There is a great variety of means to be employed for the salvation of different men. I do not mean that there is more than one Gospel, or any second way of entering the kingdom of God. But the aspects of truth are indefinitely varied; the one great truth by which we are saved is not to be confined to one fixed and changeless form of expression; and it spreads itself out in conformity to the capacity and accomplishment of the mind into which it enters. If it were not so, we might as well have automata moved by clock-work to parrot off a set form of words, muezzin-like, from the top of our churches. What an infinite variety in men themselves, their talents, their dispositions, their education, their habits, their prejudices, their modes of acquiring and retaining opinions. These are circumstances which are not to be overlooked by any wise man, in the pulpit or out of it, who would be successful in saving souls. What is an excellent rule in all forms of convincing and persuasive speech, at the bar, before a jury, in a schoolroom, in a political meeting, should never be disregarded by any man who would inform, persuade, and guide others on religious subjects; viz.: Place yourself, as much as possible, in the circumstances of those whom you address. Take into account how they have been educated; make allowance for their prejudices; enter into all the feelings peculiar to their age, their station in society, and adapt your mode of approach, as far as possible, to them. Here the example of the Apostle again instructs us. With no chameleonlike propensity to change his opinions with his company; with no inconsistency whereby to condemn and degrade himself, he possessed the power, in the intense desire to do good, to place himself in the very position of any and every man whom he would win to Christ. He did not go through the world like Sir Artegale's iron man Talus, with a flail, crushing and trampling down all opposition, provoking wrath, and stirring up to the utmost every malignant passion, rasping and lacerating feeling, having no part or lot in human infirmity. He knew how the Jew felt; and throwing himself into a Christian sympathy with the Jew, sought to save the Jew. He turned again to the Gentile, educated under different customs, familiar with a different philosophy, and forthwith he who determined to know nothing but Christ and Him crucified, adroitly conforms his style of address, his mode of approach, to his new auditors. He would have been insane had he done otherwise. He would have frustrated his own object by a

different procedure.

It would be a pleasant rhetorical exercise, suited better to another place, to analyze the several discourses of Paul, as recorded in the book of the Acts, and show how skillfully he varies himself so as to conform to his several auditors. Contrast his speech or sermon in Pisidia, in the synagogue of Antioch, with his address before the Areopagites, the highest court at Athens. In the one he becomes a Jew, thinks like a Jew, speaks like a Jew; he descants on Jewish history, out of which history he brings forth the Saviour. At Athens he encounters the Epicureans and the Stoics. No stranger is he to their prejudices and their philosophies. With what inimitable grace and self-possession, a master of himself and his subject, does he set off in his address. The very style of his Greek is classical. He quotes their own Greek pagan poets. Verily the Christian Jew is transformed into a polished Grecian debater; and why should he not be, seeing that he would save some at Athens too?

Listen to him again, when, standing on the stairs of the temple, he speaks in the Hebrew tongue to the Jews; relating his conversion, and subsequently repeating the same narration in a very different form and style before Agrippa, the Roman governor. With the weak he became weak; forcing his large mind down into sympathy with all their weak and narrow prejudices, for the weak he would save. With the mighty and the noble, the wise and the great, though he had a theme which he knew would be unwelcome to their hearts, the more did he raise himself up to their level, that he might command a hearing and a respect. Among the tent-makers of Corinth, he became a tent-maker; talked in their language, sympathized in their pursuits, that they might be Because the Gospel detects prejudice, it is a sad mistake to infer that it was designed to excite and provoke prejudice. When our Lord told his disciples that the effect of his gospel would be to send swords rather than peace among the relationships of life, he spoke of an effect incidental and not designed. He also instructed his disciples to be wise as serpents, and harmless as doves; and that man has not yet learned the first lesson of nature or grace who hopes to save the souls of any in his family, neighborhood, or walks of usefulness, without considering the age, circumstances, education, and characters of those whom he seeks to

approach and address.

A young minister just entering upon his profession in a rural district, was informed that a certain farmer in his parish was violently prejudiced against him as a "proud and college-bred" He resolved to pay him an early visit. The man was in the fields mowing the clover, in the midst of his men. The minister, wisely avoiding untimely interruption, resorted to the meadow. while the dew was yet sparkling on the grass, and requesting the loan of a scythe, led on the work, as if it had been the pleasant pastime of his youth. Prejudice was disarmed, and melted into partiality and confidence, and, subsequently, Christian conversion. To the farmer he had become a farmer, that he might save the farmer. Precisely what Paul did on Mars Hill, when he quoted to his classic audience from Cleanthus' Ode to Jupiter, and "Dionysius the Areopagite clave unto him and believed." If you would save a child, you must become a child. How absurd to give a babe strong meat; or feed Christ's little lambs in racks so high that nothing but a giraffe can reach them.

A man who has an object to accomplish, devises all expedients, invents and tries now this, now that. What is most admirably adapted to one, may be repulsion and effervescence to another. Of the art of doing good we should be studious; and means are many. We could not, in conscience, eulogize the poetry of John Bunyan as the best versification in our language. It is not quite so smooth and polished as that of Pope; nor does its measure equal the glorious majesty of Milton. Yet we might search far and long before we found better sense, or sager advice, than the following lines in his rhyming apology for the Pilgrim's

Progress:-

"You see the way the fisherman doth take
To catch the fish; what engines doth he make?
Behold how he engageth all his wits;
Also his snares, lines, angles, hooks, and nets.
Yet fish there be that neither hook, nor line,
Nor snare, nor net, nor engine can make thine—
They must be groped for, and be tickled too,
Or they will not be catch'd whate'er you do."

God be thanked that we have the Dreamer's Allegory, as well as Butler's Analogy. Give children their medicine, if you must, in their milk. Many a man has found Jesus Christ in the Tinker's Dream—the second uninspired book in our language for genius, wit, and wonder—who would have found nothing but verjuice, spleen, and prejudice, as Bolingbroke did in the forced reading of Dr. Manton's one hundred and nineteen sermons on the one hundred and nineteenth Psalm.

While it is true that an incidental activity of opposition is a more hopeful sign in the recovery of the soul, than downright insensibility, just as spasms and acute pain are better than paralysis and coma, yet no man has a right to provoke hostility, and excite prejudice of settled purpose and plan. We have no right to heap up stumbling-blocks; rather should we remove them, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way. 'It is an ingenious art of the devil to push a man on in an opinionated, self-willed, cast-iron, imprudent, and headstrong way, and then misname this Christian fidelity. Better is it to be studious of occasions. Speak a word in season. Be fruitful in expedients. Be expert in means, that by all you may save some. If the desire and motive at the heart be right, the means will not be wanting. Now it will be an interview on purpose; now an incidental word; now a visit of consolation in an hour of affliction; and now the loan of a book, or the mission of a letter. Watch for souls; so fowlers seek their prey, and good agencies must counteract the bad.

In short, an active desire to save men makes us catholic and prudent. And by being catholic, in this connection, is not meant a blind, unthinking charity, which dissolves away into vapory nothingness; and by prudence we intend something very different from that which the world designates by the word, in whose nomenclature it passes for an adroit avoidance of all offence to our own injury. When we say that the desire and endeavor to save lost men makes us catholic and prudent, we mean just what is implied in the conduct of the Apostle as here exhibited; a carelessness about all unimportant differences, provided that the main thing may be gained; and the seeking of the best ends by the best

means.

We must now add, and that emphatically, that there is little hope of hitting this line of discrimination, unless the heart is first possessed of the right view of man's lost condition, and prompted by the irrepressible desire to secure his salvation. If this be wanting, one is as sure to fall into worldly conformity as waters to flow downward.

#### If you would learn to please, Do what others do with ease,

is the compendious direction of worldly and fashionable life: and this that the world may be pleased with you. Jesus Christ has said to all His disciples, Be not conformed to this world—in the sense of being converted over to the world—but seek, by all means, to convert the world over to Christ. Be consistent. Be manly. Be earnest. Yield what you may, when yielding will save. Be firm as a rock where you must, that thereby you may gain the more.

If our hearts were only burning with love for Christ, and the souls He has died to save, we should not need so many discrimina-

tions; nor should we be left to wander and sink in the bogs and swamps of doubtful and debatable questions, which make up so much of the supposed neutral space between Christian consistency and worldly conformity.

May the Spirit of all grace and life enlighten our eyes, and move our hearts to a just apprehension of human guilt and peril, and to all forms and expressions of fidelity, that by all means we may save

some!

#### IV.

## THE SEA GIVING UP ITS DEAD.

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"And the sea gave up the dead which were in it."-Rzv. xx. 13.

The resurrection was a favorite theme with the apostles. The fact of Christ's having risen, was with them the crowning miracle of his earthly course, and an irrefragable argument of his divine mission. The resurrection of all mankind by Christ's power, to be judged at Christ's bar, was one of the truths upon which the first ministers of the gospel sought to turn the eyes of all their Peter preached this doctrine to the scribes of Jerusalem, and Paul proclaimed it amid the philosophers of Athens. And what thoughts struggle within us, as we look forward to such a change! These corruptible bodies shall stand again in the closest companionship with the souls that once inhabited them-that at death deserted them, but which now have resumed them. According to the deeds done in the body, men are to be judged. term of probation closed when the spirit quitted the body, and dropped it into the grave. The time of judgment begins when that grave is opened and that body reanimated, "that every one may receive the things done in his body."\* We are prone, perhaps, to think too much of these perishable tabernacles of clay. But we do not, my beloved hearers, think enough of them, unless we think of them often and vividly, as bodies that are one day to rise again from the dead, endued with an indestructible existence, and capacitated for the endless bliss of heaven, or the eternal misery of hell.

I. This great doctrine, the resurrection of the body, seems yet better fitted than the kindred truth of the immortality of the soul, to make a powerful impression on the mind of man, when receiving the gospel for the first time. The heathen may have heard of the existence after death of the immaterial spirit within him; but he thinks of that principle as something impalpable and unearthly, that he has never yet seen, and that is scarce the same with

himself. He may have heard even that after death he should still have a body. He may have been taught, as many an idolatrous creed teaches its votaries, that the soul shall pass after death into other bodies of the higher or the lower orders of being. doctrine of the transmigration of souls cannot take the same hold on his mind as does the scriptural truth, teaching him the resurrection of the existing body. The thoughts of the man, his fears, his hopes, and his plans, have had reference chiefly to the body. Bring him to look upon it as possible, that this—the material framework in which he has enjoyed or suffered, by which he has labored and acquired, which he has clothed and fed, and in which he has sinned—this body, which, in most of his thoughts, has been regarded as the whole of himself—is to live again beyond the grave, and he is startled. Talk to him of the inward man of the soul, and he listens, as if you spoke of a stranger. But bring your statements home to the outward man of his body, and he feels that it is he himself, who is to be happy or to be wretched in that eternity of which you tell him. Hence a living missionary, in his first religious instructions to the king of a heathen tribe in South Africa, found him indifferent and callous to all his statements of the gospel, until this truth was announced. It aroused in the barbarian chief the wildest emotions, and excited an undisguised He had been a warrior, and had lifted up his spear against multitudes slain in battle. He asked, in amazement, if these his foes should all live. And the assurance that they should arise, filled him with perplexity and dismay, such as he could not conceal. He could not abide the thought. A long-slumbering conscience had been pierced through all its coverings. Well do such incidents illustrate the fact, that He who gave the gospel knew what was in man, and infused into the leaven of his own word those elements that are mightiest to work upon all the powers of man's soul, and to penetrate with their influence the whole mass of human society. And in our announcement of that gospel, we do well to adhere to the scriptural pattern given us by the Author of the gospel. Many of the other doctrines of Christianity are almost insensibly modified, in our mode of presenting them, by the natural religion which intimates, if it does not establish, these or similar truths. But the doctrine of the resurrection of the body is not a doctrine of natural It is purely a doctrine of revelation, and becomes known to us merely from the living oracles of Scripture. And as man's reason did not discover it, it is not for man's reason to alter or amend the doctrine according to his caprices and prejudices.

In what glorious and terrific imagery does the Scripture before us array the scenes of the resurrection. In the heavens, thronged by angels in all their glory, is seen the descending throne. Upon it, in his own and his Father's glory, sits the Son of Man, the crucified Nazarene, now the judge of quick and dead. Before

him the material heavens are rolled together as a scroll, and the elements melt with fervent heat. The creation cannot abide the dread presence of its Creator, "from whose face the earth and the heavens fled away;" and yet they cannot escape it: "and there was found no place for them." His bare word had accomplished the miracle of creation, and now, by a kindred act of power, his mere glance shakes the world, and awes it into preparation for the judgment. The old heathen talked of their "cloud-compelling Jove," whose eye gathered all the storms of the skies. But how mean is all this to the scriptural imagery of a world-compelling The trumpet sounds. The earth shakes with inward commotions. Its dead-its ancient dead-all the buried of forgotten tribes, and of antediluvian times, are coming; more numerous than the hosts ever mustered by earthly captain to the battle, yet all their numbers infuse into them no courage in meeting their judge. They have no thought of resisting his power. Whatever the gods in whom they trusted once, they feel now the presence, and await the fiat of the one true God, Maker and Judge of heaven and earth. The patriarchs, who lived when the world was young, and the coming generations to be born long after our death, who shall have lived when that world had grown old, shall, with us, stand before the judgment-seat. From this tribunal there lies no appeal, and of the sentence now to be uttered there can be no reversal, and no revision.

It will be a scene of solemn interest, not only as the meeting of man with his Redeemer and Judge, but from the meeting of mankind together. The scriptural accounts of the judgment represent it as an occasion when we shall know ourselves at least. From their descriptions of that day, as a day of disclosures, when the secrets of all hearts shall be made manifest, they seem also to imply that we shall know others, and be known by them. Without our consciousness of our own identity, there could evidently be no sense of guilt; and without our knowledge of the identity of our fellow-sinners, it seems to us, there could be no disclosures, such as the Bible predicts. Man then, in that gathering, will not only know himself, and know his God, but he will know his race. And this, to the sinner, will add inconceivably to the terrors of that The ungodly will meet there the righteous, who warned him in vain, and all whose warnings are about to be verified. Long-forgotten emotions, and privileges undervalued and misimproved, will flash upon the memory, as the eye glances on the face of some dead friend, with whom those feelings and opportunities were associated. The unconverted child of the Sabbath schools shall face his faithful teacher; and parents and children, pastors and people, all the connections which death had for a time sundered, shall there recognize each other. It will be to some a fearful meeting, as they encounter there for the first time those whose death they had occasioned. The murderer will confront

his victim. Cain and Abel, who have been, perhaps, parted from each other since the hour when the fratricide fled from the scene of his crime, and the body of his brother lay breathless in the dust, will now meet again. The body which sunk beneath that murderous blow, dealt by a brother's hand, and the hand which inflicted that blow, will be there, gathered again from the indiscriminate dust over which the world has trodden for scores of But if it be fearful to meet, thus, any on whom we may have brought temporal death, how much more may the scene be dreaded, by those who have occasioned the spiritual death of others, as the scene of their meeting with the proselytes and admirers, whose souls they aided in ruining forever. It will be sad for Caiaphas to meet the innocent Messiah whom he adjudged to death, though it was but the death of the body; but it would seem almost equally sad for the Jewish High Priest to face there his kindred and friends, whose unbelief his arguments sealed, and whose impenitence his example served to render obdurate and final, for upon them he will have brought the death of the soul. The meetings of the resurrection will form, then, no small portion of its terrors. This is the truth upon which we would chiefly insist, from the part of Scripture now before us. We have considered, generally, the resurrection of the dead. Let us proceed next to consider the dead of the sea, who are in our text distinguished from the rest of the dead; and thence let us pass to the effects of their reunion with the rest of mankind, who ended their mortal career elsewhere than on the deep. Our remaining divisions will be, therefore,

II. The sea giving up its dead.

III. The meeting of the dead, so given up of the sea, with the dead of the land.

II. The sea will be found thickly peopled with the mortal remains of mankind. In the earlier ages of the world, when the relations of the various nations to each other were generally those of bitter hostility, and the ties of a common brotherhood were little felt, the sea, in consequence of their comparative ignorance of navigation, served as a barrier, parting the tribes of opposite shores, who might else have met only for mutual slaughter, ending in extermination. Now that a more peaceful spirit prevails, the sea, which once served to preserve, by dividing the nations, has, in the progress of art and discovery, become the channel of easier intercourse and the medium of uniting the nations. It is the great highway of traffic, a highway on which the builder cannot encroach, and no monarch possesses the power of closing the path, or engrossing the travel. Thus continually traversed, the ocean has become, to many of its adventurous voyagers, the place of burial. But it has been also the scene of battle, as well as the highway of commerce. Upon it have been decided many of those

conflicts which determined the dynasty or the race, to whom for a time should be committed the empire of the world. It was on the sea, in the fight of Salamis, that the fleets of Greece and Persia contended, whether the despotism and wealth of the East should extend their widening sway over the freedom and arts of It was in the sea-fight of Actium, that the imperial power of Rome, then claiming dominion over the world, was assured to Augustus and his successors, and the way was prepared for the universal peace that reigned at our Saviour's birth. this element was fought the battle of Lepanto, where the right arm of the Ottoman was broken. And, as we come down to our own times, the fights of Aboukir, Trafalgar, and Navarino, all contests upon the sea, were battles affecting in no slight degree the destinies of all Europe, and the civilized world. All these have served to gorge the deep with the carcasses of men. It has had, again, its Though man may talk of his power to bridle the elements, and of the triumphs of art, compelling all nature to do his work, yet there are scenes on the sea in which he feels his proper impotence. And when God lets loose his winds, and calls up his billows, man becomes sensible of his dependence. How many in all ages, since commerce first began her voyages of profit or discovery, have perished in the waters, foundering in the midnight storm, driven on the unsuspected rocks, engulfed by the whirlpool, or dashed by winds against some iron-bound coast. Even in our own times, with all our improvements in the art of navigation, and with all the expenditures that are incurred to increase the mariner's security, it has been calculated by some, that each year one thousand ships are lost at sea.

The sea, then, has its dead. And when the trump is blown, the archangel's summons to the judgment, the sea shall give up these its long-buried treasures. The gold and the jewels it has accumulated, the "buried argosies," with all the rich freight which it has swallowed up, will be permitted to slumber unreclaimed; but no relic that has formed part of the corpse of a child of Adam will be left unclaimed or unsurrendered in that hour. The invalid, who, in quest of health, embarked on the sea, and perished on the voyage, committed to the deep with the solemn ceremonies of religion—the pirate, flung into the waves from a deck which he had made slippery with blood—the emigrant's child, whose corpse its weeping parents surrendered to the deep on their way to a land of strangers—the whaler, going down quick into death midst his adventurous employment—the wretched slave, perishing amid the horrors of the Middle Passage—the sailor, dropped from the yard-arm in some midnight gale—the wrecked, and the dead in battle, all will arise at that summons. The mariners of all times, who have died on their loved element, those who rowed on the galleys of Tyre or Carthage, or manned the swift ships of Tarshish, will be there, together with the dead of our own days. The idolater, who sunk from some Chinese junk while invoking his graven images; and the missionary of the cross, who, like Coke, perished on his way to preach the gospel to the heathen, or who, like Chamberlain, compelled to return from the field of missionary toil, with shattered health, and all wearied and spent with labors for Christ, has expired on his homeward way—all, all shall be there. As these shall reappear from the entombing waters, will their coming have no effect upon the multitudes who died on the shore, and whose bodies also the cemeteries and sepulchres of earth shall on that day have restored? We have thus reached the last division of our subject.

III. The meeting of the dead of the sea with the dead of the land.

1. There must be, then, in this resurrection from the sea, much to awaken feeling in the others of the risen dead, from this, if from no other cause: these, the dead of the sea, will be the kindred and near connections of those who died upon the land. Among those whom the waters shall in that day have restored, will be some who quitted home expecting a speedy return, and for whose coming attached kindred and friends looked long, but looked in vain. The exact mode, and scene, and hour of their deaths have remained until that day unknown to the rest of mankind. And can it be, without feeling, that these will be seen again by those who loved them, and who through weary years longed for their return, still feeding "the hope that keeps alive despair?" The dead of ocean will be the children and pupils, again, of the dead of the land. Their moral character may have been formed, and their eternal interests affected, less by their later associates on the deep, than by the earlier instructions they received on shore. They may have exhibited on the deck and in the forecastle only the examples they witnessed in the nursery, and the tempers they cherished, and the habits they formed in the home. When these are restored, they are restored to witness for or against their parents, and the associates of their childhood and youth. These last may have died on shore, but by their influence on the mariner, they have transmitted their own spirit and moral character over the wide waste of waters, to remote and barbarous shores. It cannot, in the very nature of the human soul-its memory, its affections, and its conscience remaining what they now are—it cannot but be a scene of solemn interest, when the dead of the land shall behold their kindred dead of the sea.

2. Let it be remembered, again, that a very large proportion of those who have thus perished on the ocean, will appear to have perished in the *service* of the landsman. The mariner will appear very generally, we say, to have found his watery grave while in the service of those dwelling upon shore. Some in voyages of discovery, despatched on a mission to enlarge the bounds of human

knowledge, or to discover new routes for commercial enterprise, and new marts for traffic. Thus perished the French navigator La Pevrouse, whose fate was to the men of the last generation so long the occasion of anxious speculation. Still greater numbers have perished in the service of commerce. The looms and forges of Britain could not continue to work, and famine would stalk through her cities, did not her ships bear abroad the manufactures of her artisans to every clime. It is to the sailor we owe it that the cottons of Manchester, and the cutlery of Birmingham reach even the wigwams of our western Indians. employs and needs the seaman, and the scholar beyond the Alleghanies studies books that were purchased for him in the bookfairs of Germany, and brought across the sea by the adventurous And look to the home, and see how many of its delicacies, and luxuries, and adornments are brought to us from abroad by the sailor's skill and enterprise. And our agriculture needs his The grains of the North, and the cotton of the South, would find little vent, were not the swift ships ready to bear them to a They have served the church also. By them the Pilgrim Fathers reached a refuge on these shores, and found a home. them the missionary has been wafted to his station in the heathen world. As a people we are under special obligations to the art and enterprise of the navigator. We are a nation of emigrants. The land we occupy was discovered and colonized by the aid of the The seaman has, then, been employed in our service. And as far as he was our servant, doing our work, we were bound to care for his well-being; and if he perished in our service, it was surely our duty to inquire whether he perished in any degree by The ten commandments describe the duties of the employer as well as those of the parent. Care for the servant as well as the child was one of the lessons of Sinai. And thought literally the servant named in the Decalogue might be only the servant of the household, not he who does service for us at a distance; yet the spirit of these commandments is not to be confined by so close and literal an interpretation. When our Saviour was asked, "Who is my neighbor?" he pointed the inquirer to the remote and alien Samaritan. reach, and all whom we use in service, mediate or immediate. we should seek to benefit, as far as our power and influence extend.

3. Others of those buried in the waters have lost their lives in defence of those upon the shore. In the last of our wars with the mother country, the navy was regarded as the right arm of our defence, under God, from the foreign foe. And so it has been with other lands. Their possessions, their liberties, their families and homes, have been protected by the deaths of those whom they have never known, but who expired, fighting their battles, leagues away, on the deep sea. Are no obligations imposed on us, in behalf of

those who have thus befriended us, and in behalf of their successors and associates? Can a nation claim the praise of common honesty or gratitude, who neglect the moral and spiritual interests of these

their defenders?

4. Let us reflect, also, on the fact, that many of those who have perished on the waters will be found to have perished through the neglect of those living on shore. We allude not merely to negligence in providing the necessary helps for the navigator. The Government, that should leave the shoals and reefs in its harbors unmarked by buoys, and that, along a line of frequented but dangerous sea-coast, should rear no light-houses, would be held guilty of the death of all shipwrecked in consequence. But may there not be other classes of neglect equally or yet more fatal? parent who has neglected to govern or instruct his child, until that child, impatient of all restraint, rushes away to the sea as a last refuge, and there sinks, a victim to the sailor's sufferings or the sailor's vices, can scarce meet, with composure, that child in the day when the sea gives up its dead. Or if, as a community, or as churches, we shut our eyes to the miseries of the sick and friendless seaman. or to the vices and oppressions by which he is often ruined for time and eternity, shall we be clear in the day when inquisition is made for blood? No, unless the church does her full duty, or in other words, reaches in her efforts the measure of her full ability. for the spiritual benefit of the seaman, her neglect must be chargeable upon Now, in the Saviour's description of the condemnation of sinners at the last day, it will be observed, that he selects instances, not of sins of commission, but of sins of omission, as destroying the world. "Inasmuch as ye did it not," is the ground of the doom pronounced. May not the perishing sailor take up most of the items of that sentence, and charge them home upon many of the professed disciples of Christ? Neither by influence, nor prayers, nor alms, did they relieve his temporal and spiritual destitution, when hungry, or thirsty, or sick, or naked, or in prison. And far as this neglect operated to form the habits that hastened his death, and led, perhaps, to his eternal ruin, so far it cannot be desirable to think of meeting him again, among those who shall rise in the last day from the ocean depths, to stand with us before the judgment-seat.

5. Many, we remark lastly, of the dead of the sea will be found to have been victims to the sins of those upon shore. Those who have perished in unjust wars waged upon that element, will they have no quarrel of blood against the rulers that sent them forth? The statesmen, the blunders or the crimes of whose policy the waters have long concealed, must one day face those who have been slaughtered by their recklessness. How many of the victims over whom the dark blue sea rolls its waters, have perished, year by year, in the nefarious slave-trade. Such is the large proportion of the miserable children of Africa who die on the voyage, that, along the ordinary course of the slave ship from the eastern shores

of Africa to our own continent, the deep must be strewn, and the bottom of the sea, at some portions of the way, paved with the remains of those who have been torn from their country and home. by the orders or connivance of the slave-trader, to perish on the ocean. In the day of the resurrection that galaxy of skeletons will rise; and the voice of wailing and accusation, stilled for centuries beneath the waters, will be lifted up to be stilled no more forever. And so it may be said of every other form of wickedness, of which those that sail in our ships are rendered the instruments or the vic-The keeper of the dram-shop, or the brothel, where the sailor is taught to forget God and harden himself in iniquity, will not find it a light thing, in that great day of retribution, to encounter those whom he made his prey. The seaman may not have died on the premises of his tempter, in drunken riot; but out upon the far ocean he may have carried the habits there acquired, and died, the victim of intemperance, or profligacy, in a climate far removed from that where he was first lessoned in the ways of ruin, sinking perhaps in a shipwreck, caused, as many shipwrecks have been caused, by the intoxication of the commander or his crew. But the sea does not contain all the victims among its sons, who have thus been destroyed by the vices learned of the landsman. Many a sailor thus corrupted has perished on shore in a drunken broil, or pined away in some foreign hospital, or ended his days in a prison. Human laws seized not on those who first ensnared him; but will divine laws be equally indulgent, or equally remiss? The literature of the shore will be called to account for its influence on the character and well-being of the seaman. The song writer, who, perhaps, a hungry and unprincipled scribbler, penned his doggerel lines in some garret, little careful except as to the compensation he should earn, the dirty pence that were to pay for his rhymes, will one day be made to answer for the influence that went forth from him to those who shouted his verses, in the night watch, on the far sea, or perchance upon some heathen shore. The infidel, who may have sat in elegant and lettered ease, preparing his attacks upon the Bible and the Saviour, thought little, probably, but of the fame and influence he should win upon the shore. But the seeds of death which he scattered may have been wafted whither he never thought to trace them. And in that day of retribution, he may be made to lament his own influence on the rude seaman whom he has hardened in blasphemy and impiety; and who has sported with objections derived by him at the second hand or third hand from such writers, whilst he figured amongst his illiterate and admiring companions, as the tarred Voltaire or Paine of the forecastle and the round-top. the merriest and boldest scoffer of the crew.

The meeting, then, of the dead of the land with the dead of the sea will be one of dread solemnity, because of the ties of kindred and influence that bound them together—and because multitudes of those buried in the deep died in the service of the landsman, or

in his defence, many by his neglect, and many as the victims of the varied wickedness in which he had instructed, hardened, or employed them. Those who have been allied in sin, and accomplices in transgression, will find it one of the elements of their future torment, to be associated together in the scenes of the last judgment, and in those scenes which lie beyond that day. The animosity, revenge, and hate of the unregenerate heart, then released from all restraint, and exasperated by despair, will find vent, and rage uncontrolled through the sinner's long eternity of woe.

In conclusion, let us dwell on some of the practical results of the theme we have considered.

1. The dead shall rise, all shall rise, and together. From the land and from the sea, wherever the hand of violence, or the rage of the elements have scattered human dust, shall it be reclaimed. And we rise to give account. We rise to be judged. If, my hearers, we would anticipate that judgment, we might, as the apostle assures us, escape it, "for if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged."\* If, feeling our sins, we do, as penitents, confess and forsake them, and flee to Christ and implore the Spirit, the dawn of that day will bring to us no terrors, and the sound of that trump be the welcome summons to a higher degree of blessedness. Cleansed in the Saviour's blood, renewed by the Spirit, and arrayed in the righteousness of Christ, we may in that day stand accepted, confident, and fearless. But, out of Christ, judgment will be damnation.

2. If the reappearance from the seas of the sinner, who perished in his sins, be a thought full of terror; is there not, on the other hand, joy in the anticipation of greeting those who have fallen asleep in Christ, but whose bones found no rest beneath the clods of the valley, and whose remains have been reserved under the waters until that day, while, over their undistinguished resting-place, old ocean with all its billows has for centuries pealed its stormy anthem? Then to see them freed from decay, and restored to the friends in Christ who had loved and bewailed them—this will be joy. Ensure, Christian parent, the conversion of your sea-faring child, and then, whatever may betide him, it shall be well. His body may rest as safely amid coral and sea-weed as in the churchyard; and his soul fly as swiftly to the bosom of Christ from the midst of engulfing waters, as from a death-bed, attended by all the watchfulness and all the tender sympathy of weeping friends.

3. This community especially owes a debt to that class of men, who go down to the sea in ships, and do business in the great waters. The providence of God seems to indicate that our city is yet to become the Tyre of this western world. Some have estimated the seamen who yearly visit our port at more than seventy

thousand, and suppose the average number constantly in our harbor to be from three to five thousand. Contributing as they do to the comforts and prosperity of every home, and guarding, as in time of war they do, this commercial metropolis, do they not demand and deserve a still increasing share in our sympathies and aid?

4. It is, again, by no means the policy of the church, to overlook so influential a class, as that of our sea-faring brethren. They are in the path of our missionaries to the heathen. If converted, they might be amongst their most efficient coadjutors, as, whilst unconverted, they are among the most embarrassing hindrances the missionary must encounter. They have, it should be also remembered, in their keeping, the highways of the earth, along which travel its literature, its commerce, and its freedom. What would be thought of the statesmanship or patriotism of the man who, in time of war, would propose surrendering to the enemy all the roads and bridges of the land, in hopes of retaining possession of the rest of the territory? The mere proposal would be regarded as combining folly the most absurd, and treason the most disastrous. Yet what else is the church doing, if she relinquish the sea-faring class to the influence of sin and to the will of the destroyer of souls? She would be proposing virtually a most ruinous truce with Satan, when resigning these to his unresisted control, and when offering to abandon to his keeping the keepers of the highways of the nations.

5. While humbled in the review of her past negligence, and in the sense of present deficiencies, as to her labors for the seaman, the church has yet cause for devout thankfulness in the much that has recently been done for the souls of those who go down to the sea in ships, and in the perceptible change that has already been wrought in the character of this long-neglected class of our fellow-citizens and fellow-immortals. God has poured out his Spirit even on the incipient and uncertain efforts of his people; and from many a cabin and forecastle the voice of prayer even now ascends, and on many a deck the words of this salvation are read. "Let us not

be weary in well-doing."

6. And now, lastly, we ask each of you: In that day, when earth and sea shall meet heaven in the judgment, where do you propose to stand? Among the saved, or the lost—the holy, or the sinful—at the right hand of the Judge, or at his left? Purposes of partial reformation or of future repentance cannot save you. Christ is now willing to be gracious. He who will at last appear as the Judge, now comes as the Redeemer. He is now an Advocate; soon he will be the Avenger. Heaven stoops to win you. Hell rises to allure and destroy you. Oh, yield not to Satan. Reject not Christ; for the Judge is at the door. And not this soul only of yours, but this body also must live—must live forever; and can you wish it to live in endless, hopeless misery? A throb-

bing brow, or an aching tooth, are now sufficient to embitter all the enjoyments of life. What will it be when the whole body is cast into torment? Can you desire to meet your impenitent friends, to spend an eternity together in growing hate and mutual recrimination—to face your pious friends, a godly father, or a praying mother, and catch your last glance of hope, your last sight of happiness, as you see them mounting to glory, whilst you sink yourselves into a sea of fire—the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone forever and ever?

## V.

# THE SCRIPTURAL ESTIMATE OF PHILOSOPHY.

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"Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the traditions of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ."—Cot. ii. 8.

The glorious richness of the epistle of Paul to the Colossians is all owing to the fulness and vastness of its presentation of Christ. The glory of Christ there rises like a sea of light, and swallows up everything else in its bosom, and on its waves the soul is borne onward, entranced, itself, in glory. And as this epistle begins with the supremacy, the infinite pre-eminence, the all-in-all-ness of Christ, in all worlds, all beings, and all things, in all God's universe, and then applies, out of this infinitude of glory and absoluteness of reign, the consequent rule of perfection and obedience for believers in Christ, so the first thing we are to consider, prior to opening the leaves of this text, is the completeness of the Christian in Christ,

and the all-in-all-ness of Christ to the Christian. "Ye are complete in him." All your real need is to be in Christ, and all your anxiety should be, to be rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith in him, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. For he is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning of grace, and the completion of glory. All that we need, for time and eternity, we find in him; and he is made unto us, of God, our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. This secures our independence of all mere human wisdom. You are entirely superior to that, you have no need of that, just in proportion as you are rooted and grounded in Christ, and have access, by faith in him, through the ministration of the Spirit, to the unsearchable riches of his Word, and all God's treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Ye are complete in him; and therefore, when men come to you in all the puffing majesty and parade of human science and speculation, beguiling you with enticing words, and assuring you that this or that philosophy or speculation must be mastered by you, before you will comprehend the genius of Christianity, or that it is only through this or that ingenious theory, as through a new-constructed telescope, that you can see Christ Jesus as he is, or the wonders of

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the Word aright, or can arrive at the completeness of Christian knowledge and character, remember that you are complete in him; and that too, not according to men's philosophies, nor by their assistance, but just according to God's Word, and by the teaching of God's Spirit. And since in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and ye are complete in him, as you have been taught, in the Word, and by the Spirit, beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the traditions of men,

after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

And here is the first thing to be considered in the warning of this text, as a contrasted point of truth and duty, in opposition to the babblings of science falsely so called; namely, the supremacy and independence of God's Word, and of the Christian in it, under the guidance of the divine Spirit; and the fact that faith in God's Word, and in Christ Jesus as presented there, is the only perfection of human reason, the only true philosophy and science. bringing of the Word of God to the bar of human reason, and the throwing of it upon mere external evidence and philosophy for its support and understanding, were a portion of that leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees, against which our blessed Lord cautioned But you can neither believe God's Word, nor have his disciples. any understanding of it, according to the mere traditions and phi-You are thrown upon God's Spirit, and if you losophies of men. have not got your theology there, philosophy can never let in one ray of spiritual light upon your soul, You cannot know God's Word, but by the Spirit of God, If the Holy Spirit be in your soul, guiding you into the truth, as the truth's living Interpreter, then you will see and know it; but not otherwise. All true faith is life, not the movement of the understanding merely, but of the heart. Belief in God's Word is life, a thing dependent not upon evidence, but upon the living Spirit. And evidence itself can never be rightly seen and felt, without this life. All living theology, and all power to teach it; all true knowledge of God's Word, and all power in the use of such knowledge, are dependent on God's Spirit, and without the Holy Spirit as the guide and teacher of the soul, philosophy and speculation can do nothing for its light.

Now, divine revelation itself informs us, that this living Spirit and Interpreter of God's Word, even the Spirit of Truth, is a Being whom the world cannot receive (that is, the world unhumbled, unregenerate, unconverted,) because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him. The very pride of men's hearts, in the ignorance and darkness of self-will, prevents their receiving him. And furthermore, the same divine Word informs us, that the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. He must come humbly to God, and beg to be enlightened. In the neglect of that divine Spirit, without his teachings, and without that constant, earnest prayer, which is a habit of life and faith,

into which the Holy Spirit always leads the heaven-taught soul, it is impossible to arrive at the truth; and all the knowledge a man boasts in such a case, and all the perfection of philosophy, and all the lights of science and speculation, are but miserable presumption. The soul, in the neglect of prayer, and of God's Spirit, cannot but go astray.

And while she dotes, and dreams that the believes, She mocks her Maker, and herself deceives. Her utmost reach, historical assent, The doctrines warped to what they never meant. The truth itself is in her head as dull And useless as a candle in a skull.

Hence, it is no wonder that Paul cautioned the world of believers in Christ against pretended philosophic instruction from such Beware lest any man spoil you, through philosophy and vain deceit, after the traditions of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. The moment a man, be he a minister of the Word, or a private Christian, begins to mind tradition and philosophy, instead of Christ, or to mingle up tradition and philosophy as parts of his Christianity, that moment he begins to be spoiled. And when a man undertakes to teach and feed others with philosophy and tradition, instead of the pure milk of the Word in Christ and him crucified, he is not only securing his own starvation, but he is starving others. He feedeth on ashes; a deceived heart hath turned him aside: and curious it is to see how a man. by eating ashes himself, can persuade others also that ashes are This mixture of philosophy with the bread of life, and good food. the strong and frequent warnings against it in God's Word, remind us of the descriptions of a worthless piety in the minor prophets. "Ephraim, he hath mixed himself among the people; Ephraim is a cake not turned." Paganism and Christianity together, and even that mixture half-baked, have generally constituted the piety of the so-called philosophers of this world. And the great work of philosophy in all ages has been, to spoil the truth. And this, not always because of the badness of the philosophy, or its error, but because of setting it upon the throne, appointing it as judge. But God has determined that there shall nothing occupy the throne of God and reason in man, save only the Lamb that was slain. There shall be a simple faith in him, casting down imaginations, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. Philosophy must ever be the handmaid, not the mistress nor the judge.

And as to progress in theology, there can be no such thing but by experience. Theology itself is a production of life, of the Spirit with the Word, in hearts quickened out of the death of trespasses and sins, and new created in Christ Jesus. And all progress in theology must be the product of life, not of mere learning; for without the inward teachings and life-giving power of the Holy Spirit, men are ever learning, but never able to come to the knowledge of the truth—a phenomenon in modern times most remarkably mani-

fested, since the passing away of the first power of the Reformation, in Germany. One such theologian as Martin Luther, with the heart in a flame towards God by the divine Spirit, one such living theologian as Jonathan Edwards or John Howe, would be worth all the theological learning and learned men of modern Germany put

together.

Philosophy may possibly correct philosophy, but it cannot teach theology. It may grub up stumps, but it can never sow the seed of the Gospel. Philosophy may preoccupy the mind with such error, that all the power even of a living theology can hardly expel it. But if a nation's theology is made up not out of experience in God's Word by God's Spirit, but mainly out of theory and speculation, if it has been the work of acute intellects without faith, without regeneration, or if such minds have been the main sources of it, it can be worth little or nothing either to teach the truth or contend against error. A vast proportion of what has been called theology in our

world has been thus spoiled.

The time consumed in the vanities of mere philosophy, had it been given to spiritual discipline, and to the study of God's Word in God's light, would have made great deeps of living theology for a world to draw upon. But men have often done with God's Word, as foolishly as a band of miners would do before a mountain of gold, if instead of going down into the mines and working, they should speculate at the surface, about the abstract properties and purities of ore, the probable extent of seams, and the geological structure of creation. Just so, men work upon speculative difficulties in God's Word, instead of digging out the gold and using it. Instead of delving in the unsearchable riches of Christ, and coming to him to get rid of sin, they speculate about the origin of sin. Instead of coming to him to see more of his glory, and feel more of the power of his cross, they set up the speculation whether that glory, and the cross itself, be not, simply and merely, a grand, effective, passionate work of art!

Men are often exceedingly hampered by their philosophy, made hesitating, fearful, and incredulous. And the importance of a right mental philosophy, a mental philosophy of spiritual and not materializing tendencies, can hardly be overrated. A false philosophy may come, telling you that you can have no idea of eternity, but that of time multiplied, and no idea of God, but that of an infinitely enlarged man, and no idea of duty, but that of expediency; and if you should set up this philosophy, as your guide or judge in the application of divine truth, you would be mightly weakened in the presentation of eternity, of God, and of duty to the mind. Your only philosophy in such a case, even supposing you know no other system of human philosophy than the one thus palmed upon you, ought to be that of faith in God, and in God's Word. That, and that alone, carries you high and dry over all conflicting systems of philosophy and science, the Word of God being addressed directly

to the human conscience in precisely the same way, whether that conscience lie in the bosom of the philosopher or the fool.

But indeed we are all fools until the Word of God, by the Spirit of God, humbles us, and makes us wise. That is for us the real philosophy of heaven, the highest wisdom of earth, the profoundest exercise of the human intellect, to bow in self-denial and humility before God. If any man among you will be wise, let him become a fool, that he may be wise.

A man educated in a false philosophy in regard to the will, or any part of our spiritual being, if he sets up that philosophy as his judge of divine truth is sure to go wrong. Some of the greatest minds ever created in our world have stumbled in God's Word over the logs laid down by such a false philosophy, at the threshold of some of the clearest truths revealed for our guidance. Nor can this evil be cured by the conflict of an opposite philosophy, but only by compelling philosophy to take its place as the servant and not the master, the learner, and not the judge. A good philosophy as well as a bad one may lead the mind astray, may cause the soul to stumble, if it set up to be the judge, either of the truths of God's Word, or the workings of God's Spirit. Your philosophies and your speculations must be put by themselves, whatever question you are raising, when you come to ask, what does God tell you in the Scriptures? But speculative men are unwilling to put their own theories and philosophical speculations at the feet of Christ. Men often use their systems of philosophy, just as we use blinders on our horses, so that they may see only straight forward. They put on their philosophy, tighten the reins, crack the whip, and away; and no side view or object is noticed, or permitted to interfere. Their philosophy, like a dark lantern, permits them to see only what is straight before it, only what they please to have it shine upon.

Now all regard to philosophy, in the application of God's Word, is injurious, and very likely to weaken the power of it. It ought to come, just what it is, supreme from God, sharper than any twoedged sword, sweeping all before it. You have no questions to ask of philosophy, and if philosophy puts questions to you, and you have a passage from God's Word that answers them, that decides the matter; if not, the difficulties raised by philosophy have no more to do with your application of God's Word, than the question how the meat got into a walnut-shell has to do with your eating it. In the use of the Scriptures, you are to have no philosophy but faith, and with that you are to apply God's Word to the conscience, without any care for philosophy, be it what it may.

There is nothing further to be said where God has spoken. you believe in the law of God as his Word, it is to you supreme, decisive, whoever, or whatever may be brought against it. If you do not believe in God's Word, it is to you as worthless as philosophy itself; nay, it is to you the greatest lie the universe ever beheld. But, indeed, if you do not believe in God's Word, you fling yourself the lie in the face of your Maker; for he has declared that whoever believeth not the record God hath given us of his Son, hath made God a liar. So decisive and despotic is the obligation of belief, when God has spoken; and so independent and self-evidenced is God's Word, like his own attribute of self-existence.

Therefore, you are to run careering through all men's opinions, with God's Word, no matter what you go over. In executing God's commission in the application of divine truth, you need take no more notice of the panoply of philosophy, with which men may have armed themselves, than the chariot of paternal Deity took notice of the shields and helms, and helmed heads, over which it rode in victory. God's Word has God's authority, not yours, nor philosophy's, nor is it to be put under philosophy's jurisdiction, nor cut, nor squared, nor quartered, according to philosophy's measurement, nor graduated according to philosophy's fluctuating vagaries

or imagined discoveries.

You are to preach God's Word with God's authority. If you do, from the heart, in simple faith, God will honor you. If you do not, but are afraid, and think you must first consult philosophy, whether what God says is to be plainly spoken and admitted, then philosophy itself, in the end, will dishonor you. He that exalts God's Word, God's Word will exalt him. And no matter whom you have to deal with, be it a body of philosophers themselves, fresh from the cobwebs of their chambers, or be it the mass of common minds; the Word of God is the same thing for all, and nothing else will have power. The foolishness of preaching pleases God, and whether it pleases men or not, nothing else will move them, will conquer them. A man like John Bunyan, preaching God's Word, without any philosophy, or knowledge of any, nay, perhaps not knowing the meaning of the word philosophy; a man preaching thus, from deep, powerful, all-quickening, all-mastering experience. even among the Germans themselves, would have mighty power. There might be those so entrenched behind their atheistic philosophic systems, or so entangled in them, that there would be no breaking through; but over multitudes such preaching would have irresistible power. And such a preacher would have no more power, nor so much, over the philosophers, even if he could attack them on their own chosen ground, with the clashings of the newest, truest, and best philosophies in existence. So Paul preached among the Jews, Greeks, and Romans, utterly heedless of their many-colored, manifold, and many-armed philosophies, whatever they might be. What did he care for them? Had he wished, or had he chosen, or had God so chosen for him, he could have made as great and learned a hubbub as any of them, with Greek, Roman, Jewish, and Oriental philosophies. But he went at them with only the story of the cross, Jesus Christ and him crucified, simply that; nothing else. It was the story of the cross, not of the man without the cross; not Christ the glorious being of godlike life and character, of pure and lofty teaching, philosophy, and example; nor Christ the manifestation of Divine Love in humanity; that would have pleased both Jews and Greeks: they would have hailed that, as glorious. God Incarnate, let alone the humiliating features of the Gospel, would have been a theme for an exceedingly popular philosophy and eloquence. But Christ crucified, Christ dying on the cross between two thieves, presented a theme of mere ridicule and scorn to all the world; to all, whose hearts were not beginning to be touched and troubled by the Spirit of the Saviour. Yet Paul drove on, in his exclusiveness, with nothing but Christ and him crucified, to the Jews a stumbling-block, to the Greeks foolishness. He made that very foolishness the beginning and end of his earnestness, the sum and substance of his argument, albeit he were addressing Greeks, Jews, or Romans. He rode in upon them with God's Word; he rolled over them with the chariot of the Gospel. Sometimes they stood up again after the incursions of this strange and fiery eloquence, merely astounded for the moment, to perish in their mockery; but many were discomfited, conquered, and brought to their senses, who had been all their life-long insane in philosophy Paul kept up, through his whole life, this freshness of preaching Christ from the heart. He urged the same upon his fellowchristians; he bequeathed the same, as his dying legacy, to Timothy.

And it was because it came from the heart, that it never lost its freshness and its power. You might have heard Paul, the first year of his preaching after the journey to Damascus, and you would have heard of Christ and him crucified; and if you heard him thirty years after that, it would still be the same ever-glorious, everlasting theme, and none other-Christ and him crucified; and as fresh the thirtieth year, or the five hundredth year, if Paul could have lived so long, as when he first began to say of Christ, "Who loved me and gave himself for me." It was because along with the intrinsic and amazing greatness and comprehensiveness of the theme, in Paul's inspired vision, it was ever the fresh outpouring of a grateful, loving heart. And what must have been the sermons of the man, who could write such vast and glorious descriptions and appeals, as are contained in the epistle from which our text is drawn! It was the obligation of such preaching that he enjoined on all others; it was the legacy of such preaching, and the mantle of such power, that he left, I say, to Timothy, charging him by the Lord his Redeemer, that he never should be striving about words to no profit, but that he should preach THE WORD, in season and out of season. He could not endure to have anything presented as Christian truth in the place of Christ and him cruci-Beware lest any man spoil you, by preaching which is not after Christ.

Another of Paul's rules, intimately connected with the text, and serving as a guide and safeguard against the danger marked in it,

was this, namely, that Christians should never handle the Word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth, commending themselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. Paul's object was to manifest the truth, to open it, to make all wonder at its exceeding riches. He would not change it, nor restrict, nor conceal it, through philosophy and vain deceit, nor put tradition in its place, nor any of man's rudiments. Some commentators and preachers work hard to keep the meaning in, cut it down, restrain it, keep it from shining, make you see just as little in it as possible. Then instead of it, they bring up the great loads of their philosophy and learning. Or rather, they spike the guns of God's Word, and then roll forward their tumbrels of philosophy, and baggage wagons of erudition, as if the battle were to be gained by

those, and not by God's artillery.

Others there are again, who handle the Word of God deceitfully, by not rightly dividing it, by cutting off perhaps half of a truth, and throwing it away, or suffocating it with philosophical specula-Some treat the very centrality of the Gospel, Christ and him crucified, in this manner. Some will take the great, beaming, radiant doctrine of the atonement by the sufferings and death of Christ, and cutting off the whole matter of sufferings and death, and the whole amazing manifestation of God's righteousness and justice in the pardon of the believer, as displayed in that propitiatory sacrifice, or resolving it into the play of a dramatic exhibition, dwell only on the character and life of Christ, and make the incarnation a manifestation merely of love, and not what God affirms it to be, a propitiation, that he might be just, and yet justify the guilty and the lost. Thus, while Christ is apparently brought forward, Christ crucified is quite put in the background, and the cross and death of Christ, instead of being the grand reality in that amazing scene and system of redemption, and the power of God in arresting and saving the soul, dwindles to a mere circumstance, a mere adjunct, taken up by the way. Now by whatever words or theories such a treatment of God's Word is covered, it is handling the Word of God deceitfully, and not by manifestation of the truth, but concealment of it, by philosophy and vain deceit. Beware lest any man so spoil you, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

Others again, instead of Chirst and him crucified, present, as the main burthen and intent of the Gospel, the church and its ordinances, after the tradition of men. Some go so far, even in the Protestant communion, as to adopt the antichristian and Papal maxim, that it is through the church that we come to Christ, and not through Christ only that we come into the church. This is a dogma which has been the perdition of thousands upon thousands, and will be of thousands more. It is a word which eateth as doth a canker. It eats into the heart of the church of Christ, and devours all true piety, where it prevails, while at the same time it makes

the church big in visibility, organization, ordinances, forms, and the pomp of circumstance and power. But why, says the Word of God, if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances after the commandments and doctrines of men, as if the church were a mere worldly corporation? These are profane and vain babblings, that will increase unto more ungodliness. And certainly a church that undertakes to constitute itself in Christ, by virtue of its organization, as a church historically apostolic, and then sets up the dogma that men can be in Christ only by being in the church, is but a shadow cast by the true body of Christ; or rather, it is a merely fleshly body, vainly puffed up by a fleshly mind, and not holding the Head, the Lord Jesus, from whom all the body, by joints and bands having nourishment ministered and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God. A church proclaiming that men must come to Christ by the church, increaseth with the increase of men, but not of God. Under such a sign and dogma of tradition and world rudiment, men that come into the church to get to Christ, stop with the church, and go no further, and are likely, under the anodynes of ordinances, never to gain Christ. For along with this error comes in that other deceivableness of unrighteousness and frustration of the grace of God, anwering to the Jewish tenet of circumcision as the gate of heaven, against which Paul thundered such fiery anathemas—the tenet of baptismal regeneration—rendering the grace of God of none effect, and justification by faith a dead and useless doctrine. It may be laid down as a rule infallible, that whoever trusts in any church, or in any ordinance, or in any creature, to bring him to Christ, or to put him in Christ, will never find Christ, will never come to Christ. He never will, so long as this delusion lasts. And thus it was that Paul, by God's commission, launched the bolts of such a fiery vengeance against those who thus corrupted the church and the Word of the living God. I tell you, said he, that Christ is become of none effect unto you, whosoever ye be, that trust in such things; ye are fallen from grace. If you be baptismally regenerated, and trust in that, you will never be regenerated in any other way, and Christ can profit you nothing. If you trust to get to heaven, because you are the children of the church and of Abraham, God will sooner people heaven from the stones in the streets, than admit you there, by such contempt, nullification, and falsification of the cross of Let no man beguile you of your reward by such things. As many as desire to make a fair show in the flesh, they make much of such things, and glory in them. But God forbid that we should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto us, and we unto the world. For in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.

Now, in one way and another, the world is full of these errors,

corrupting the truth, deluding the soul, and deadening the Word of Some of these errors are like a breastwork of cotton, before a beleaguered city, in which all the balls of an invading army may be buried, and never one reach the walls, or houses, or people of the city. Just so, the very arrows of God's truth fall blunted before hearts thus entrenched by the elastic rudiments of the world, by the traditions, and commandments, and doctrines of men. And therefore it was, and is, that our blessed Lord, in the New Testament and in the Old, always did, and still does, speak with such devouring indignation against those who make paths to heaven which he has not made, and set up gates and sign-boards to heaven, of their own construction, which are gates to hell; making the commandment of God of none effect, through their tradition. Ye hypocrites! in vain do ye worship me. Ye blind leaders of the blind! Ye that beguile, and they that are beguiled, shall both fall into the It was because these dogmas and ordinances of men are the source of fleshly arrogance, persecution, and pride, the denial of the cross, the destruction of faith, the perversion of the Word of God, the corruption of the church, the delusion and destruction of the soul!

Now our subject, and this text, out of which it has directly grown, shows you what you are to find in God's Word—Jesus Christ and him crucified; what constitutes the worth of God's Word—Jesus Christ and him crucified; for what you are to cherish, study, and prize God's Word—Jesus Christ and him crucified; and how you are to study God's Word—in Christ and him crucified, in the light of his cross, and by the teachings of his Spirit. If you do not find Christ in the Word, and life and immortality only through him, the Word, with all its glory, will be of no use or efficacy with you, save in your condemnation. And our blessed Lord himself has said, that the Word which he has given unto you,

and spoken to you, that shall judge you at the last day.

But if you do find Christ in it, then you will ever value it in and for Christ. You will love it for its clear, decisive, glorious manifestation of Christ and him crucified. You will be watchful against all handling of the Word of God deceitfully, to mar the glory, beauty, and completeness of that doctrine. You will be jealous of all philosophy and vain deceit, and all the traditions of men, and all the rudiments of the world, and all the speculations of intruding fleshly minds, that would beguile you from the simplicity of your faith, and make you distrust or forget your completeness in Christ. You will be anxious to study the Word of God in God's light, by the guidance, interpretation, and indwelling life of God's Holy Spirit. It is he, the Spirit of Christ and of the Father, the Messenger of the Father and the Son, who is to lead you into all truth, to sanctify you by the truth, and in so doing, and in order so to do, taking of the things that are Christ's-not man's-and showing them to your souls. You will rely, not upon the enticing words of

man's wisdom, but upon the demonstration of the Spirit and of power. You will love Paul's exclusiveness-" I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified." And in proportion as you love and imitate that, because your love, like Paul's, is set only upon Christ, in that proportion will you also know and love the comprehensiveness and the glory of Paul's prayers; and the great strife of your prayers, the fire and life of your study of the Word, will be "that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him." And thus he will "grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love. may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth and length, and depth and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. And unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly, above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."

# VI. CHRIST AS A MECHANIC.

## BY REV. WILLIAM W. PATTON,

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"Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James and Joses, and of Juda and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at him."—MARK vi. 3.

God in the execution of his designs follows a course which differs widely from that which human wisdom would have suggested. Man is impatient; he burns with a restless desire to see his plans immediately accomplished, and hardly conceives of an important object before he rushes impetuously to secure it. Hence he often mistakes both as to the character of the end and the adaptation of the means, and, as a natural consequence, reaps bitter disappointment where he expected a harvest of success. God, on the other hand, forming his purposes in infinite wisdom, and dwelling amid the ages of eternity, where "one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day," acts without rashness, without impetuosity, without haste, and with unerring certainty. When the great design of human redemption was formed, man's wisdom, could it have been consulted, would have suggested the propriety and importance of having the atonement made immediately. He would have had the cross planted by the very gate of Paradise, that as the guilty pair issued from the garden, they might behold the vicarious sufferer opening the way for their return to life. Yes, human reason would have had the whole world pointed to an actual expiation from the very beginning, that each successive generation might have lived and died amid the noonday refulgence of gospel light. God thought otherwise. Infinite wisdom was not hasty in its efforts. To the divine mind there was in the future a "fulness of time," when it would be appropriate for the Saviour to appear and to enter upon his astounding mission. That fulness of time involved, as the event proved, a lapse of four thousand years. We may not comprehend, even after the fact, all or any of the reasons which had weight with God, but we may be certain that no mistake was made, and no fault committed. He whose moral nature is summed up in Love had surely a deep interest in pursuing the course that would

ultimately tend to the greatest good of his creatures, nor would he have delayed the actual work of atonement for forty centuries,

if there had not been sufficient and benevolent reasons.

The text is connected with another illustration of a kindred nature, of the difference between the divine and human mode of . procedure. Men are fond of parade. They love ostentation, and if engaged in a great design, plan to have the arrangements and instrumentalities splendid and imposing, that the stamp of greatness may be visible through the whole affair. They are not content to have the result speak for itself, and announce its own magnitude and importance, but must herald its praises and celebrate its majesty in every preliminary step. It is not so with God. He loves, even amid his mightiest operations, and in the execution of his noblest designs, to conceal his greatness. Often in the review of past events are we forced to say in the words of the prophet, "There was the hiding of his power." This principle of the divine procedure was strikingly announced by the Saviour, when he said, "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation." Men love to speak amid the stormy wind, the earthquake, and the fire; but the utterance of God is in "the still small voice." Had men been consulted with reference to the manner in which God should become manifest in the flesh, they would probably have recommended a glorious and triumphal descent from heaven, that should strike the nations with astonishment and awe, and secure They would have considered no other universal submission. theophany worthy of the Infinite Being, or adapted to secure the end contemplated in the redemption of a fallen world. And here, as before, God was of a different opinion, and sent his Son into the world in a lowly and humble manner, or as the apostle expresses it. "in the form of a servant." I wish on the present occasion to draw attention to this fact, and to certain lessons which it is fitted to impart.

I. Let us consider the earthly position which the Saviour assumed. When the great scheme of human redemption was devised, it was determined that the Saviour should assume the nature of the race that was to be saved, and should be born of a virgin mother. But who was the mother? From what family was she selected? Which of the royal daughters of earth was worthy to give birth to the promised Messiah? Was the choice made from the family of the Roman emperor? or of the kings innumerable who were his allies or tributaries? No: the mother of Jesus was neither queen nor princess. Was she then of noble race, numbered among the titled and wealthy of society? She was indeed of high and even royal extraction, in so far as centuries before her ancestors had been the monarchs of Judah and Israel, but as to her immediate and proximate relatives, they were probably all obscure and poor. Nothing definite is known of the early worldly position of Mary, the mother of Jesus; but as she married a

humble mechanic, and during her whole life seems to have lived in straitened circumstances, such was probably her condition from That she was poor after marriage is evident from several incidental facts in the gospel history. The Jewish law made it the duty of parents to present their young infants, especially the firstborn, to the Lord, with an accompanying offering. This offering was mercifully graduated to their worldly condition. ordinary prosperity were required to bring a lamb for a burntoffering, and a young pigeon for a sin-offering; but with regard to the poor it was thus commanded, "And if she (the mother) be not able to bring a lamb, then she shall bring two turtle doves, or two young pigeons." In the gospel of Luke we have an account of the presentation of the infant Jesus with the appropriate sacrifice. "And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord, . . . . and to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, a pair of turtle doves, or two young pigeons." From this statement it will be seen that the offering of Mary or Joseph was the one prescribed for the poor. The language of the text conducts us to the same conclusion. the course of his journeys, after he entered upon his public ministry, Jesus came to the district of country around Nazareth. where he had been brought up. On the Sabbath he entered the synagogue, and, to the astonishment of all who were present, began to teach the people and work miracles. Their astonishment, however, soon gave place to indignation, and they exclaimed, "From whence hath this man these things? and what wisdom is this which is given unto him, that even such mighty works are wrought by his hands? Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon, and are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at him." What was the difficulty with these hearers? They were unwilling to be taught by a man of such humble extraction, whose father, as Matthew relates it, was a carpenter, and whose mother, brethren, and sisters, were known to be among the common people. From the known poverty of his parents, and the consequently limited opportunities of Jesus for acquiring information in the usual manner, they were amazed at the wisdom and intelligence which he displayed, and soon their pride rebelled against sitting under the instruction of a teacher so thoroughly plebeian, upon whose family they had been accustomed to look down as unworthy of regard, because of their poverty. We read, also, that when Jesus hung upon the cross he committed his mother to the care of John, who took her to his own house; from which we may infer, that Joseph was dead, and that Mary was left in destitute and dependent circumstances. Such then was the family of whose number the Son of God was. Unknown to fame, people of common life, supporting themselves by manual labor, and counted among the poor. It will not be unreasonable if we suppose that all the playmates of the Saviour's childhood, and all the associates of his adult years were of the same humble class, so that his companions were laborers, mechanics, and artisans, while into the abodes of the rich he seldom entered, and with their refined and proud inmates scarcely ever came in contact, until his public life commenced.

Having thus scanned the circumstances of those who surrounded Christ, let us now notice his own position and rank. And here we find another illustration of the calmness, self-possession, and moderation of God, as compared with the rash haste and impetuosity Man would not only have executed the plan of atonement centuries before the time chosen by God, but he would have inducted the Saviour into office at once, that no time might Of what use could it be to have him pass through the protracted periods of infancy, childhood, and youth? Why not send him into the world full of manhood as in the case of Adam? Then his divine origin would be undeniable, as none among mankind could claim to be his parents. But if he must be born as a babe, and grow up to adult years in the same gradual manner as others, let him enter as soon as possible upon his appointed work, and begin his ministry with incipient, or at least with complete manhood. But all this plausible reasoning seemed folly to the divine mind. God knew the perishing condition of the world, and how much such a preacher as Christ was needed; and yet he went forward in his plans with deliberation and coolness. The promised Saviour appeared as a babe, and not as a man; he grew up to maturity with no greater rapidity than other children, and except the remarkable occurrence at the temple, when he was twelve years of age, and engaged in discussion with the doctors of the law, he gave no indications of his future greatness, beyond the unexampled purity Not till thirty years had elapsed did he enter upon ministry. And how were those thirty years of private of his life. his public ministry. life spent? Were they years of profound study and meditation? Did he lead the life of a recluse, preparing himself for his lofty mission? Did he place himself under the instruction of some noted Rabbi, to be qualified for the work of a public teacher? Not at On the contrary, he mingled with his fellow-men, and was one of the people, engaged in active industry. During that long period he pursued the trade of a carpenter. Nay, start not back in horror and disgust, ye delicate despisers of honest labor, who think that human fingers were only made to twirl a cane, to handle banknotes, or possibly to guide a pen. It is even so. The Lord of glory was a carpenter. Those hands which with a touch opened the eyes of the blind and unstopped the ears of the deaf, which were so often raised to bless the little children, and the thronging multitudes, and were at last nailed to the cross when the sacrifice was offered for a world's sin, had for years handled the saw, the chisel, and the plane. It was natural that Joseph should bring up his reputed son to the same trade with himself, especially as they were poor, and the labor of each member was necessary to the comfort of the family, and as it was also the custom of Jewish fathers to teach their sons some useful handicraft. But, beside this inherent probability to guide our opinion, we have the distinct reference of the text to the Saviour's well-known occupation. The people of Nazareth had been familiar with his life and habits from They were acquainted with the whole family, and were well informed with reference to their affairs; as much so, as the inhabitants of any country town are with respect to those of their neighbors. Hence when Jesus began to teach in the synagogue, they exclaimed in surprise, "Is not this the carpenter?" As though they had said, "How comes this man to be an instructor of the people? Whence are his qualifications?" Have we not seen him ever since childhood. laboring as a carpenter, the trade of his father before him? It is but a few months since he quitted the place, a plain mechanic, and now he has set up for a prophet! Away with the upstart!" Thus did those who had been most familiar with him marvel and become indignant, while Jesus quietly replied, in words that] were probably current as a proverb, "A prophet is not without honor, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house." Nothing more strikingly depicts the obscurity of Christ's early life, and the lowliness of the position which he assumed, than this natural astonishment and human-like anger and envy of his townsmen. How true is the declaration of Paul, when describing the voluntary humiliation of the Saviour, he says, "Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but (yet) made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men." It would have been unspeakable condescension, had Christ assumed human nature as the son of a king, and consented to succeed his father on an earthly throne. What was it, then, when he became the son of a mechanic, and himself labored for thirty years as a carpenter?

II. Let us attend to certain practical truths which connect themselves with the fact stated in the text. Simple as the narrative is, both as to style and subject matter, it is fruitful in important sug-

gestions, among which are the following:-

1. Confidence is to be placed in all the plans of God. Often, during the history of the human race, has he pursued a course which was mysterious to finite mind, and served to confound the received views of the divine benevolence and wisdom; but the result has invariably proved that God saw the end from the beginning, and chose that method of procedure which was best adapted to promote his own glory and the welfare of his intelligent creatures. It was certainly not to have been expected that the revelation of God in man should have been made through so obscure a personage as the son of Mary—that the divine nature should have been

united with the reputed offspring of Joseph the mechanic; yet such was the fact. It was as little, if not less, to have been expected that the long-promised Messiah, who was to reign over the nations. should have been trained among the poor, and should have labored until his thirtieth year as a common carpenter; yet this was true also. We should not have ordered it so; but "the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men." God beheld prospectively, what we can now to some extent see retrospectively, that important results depended upon the course actually pursued. By assuming so lowly a position, Christ identified himself with the mass of mankind, who are poor, and thus created a bond of attraction between himself and them, since his object was not merely to benefit the powerful, and the wealthy, who are the favored few, but chiefly the weak, destitute and neglected, who are the suffering This humiliation of the Saviour was intended also to bring out the purity and benevolence of his character. It was great self-denial, for so pure a being to mingle for thirty years with the rude, vulgar, and vicious crowd, whose tastes and pleasures were so opposite to his own; and nothing but disinterested and selfsacrificing benevolence could have led to it. Such an obscure origin and early life were also necessary to illustrate the spirituality of his kingdom, and to dispel the vain expectations of temporal triumph which the Jews connected with the advent of the Messiah. It was difficult, as it was, to banish worldly illusions from the minds of his disciples, but it would have been impossible had Christ appeared in some family of rank and wealth, and been introduced to a position of power and fame. Moreover, his humble, toilsome, and obscure life was intimately connected with the atonement, which was to be made for the world's sin, if it did not constitute in fact a part of it. It is safe to suppose that everything of the nature of humiliation, toil, and self-denial in the life of Christ was part of the price paid for the ransom of this fallen race. We can see at least, how appropriate a preparation it was for the sad close, that a life of sorrow should precede a death of pain; and also how it placed the Saviour in circumstances in which his death could be readily brought about. He was a poor man, of obscure parentage, without relatives or friends among the rich, and thus fell an easy prev to the powerful scribes and pharisees. These things are now plain, and fully justify the divine wisdom and benevolence. Let us learn from it, never to distrust the divine plan. All the purposes of God respecting us or others are right in themselves, and sure to be accomplished by the most appropriate means, notwithstanding all appearances to the contrary.

2. Let us learn that nothing is ever lost by wise caution, deliberation, and patience. As has already been remarked, man is rash and impulsive, while God is cool and deliberate, even to apparent slowness. God never strikes till the proper time arrives, but then the blow is heavy and effectual. He often takes centuries to pre-

pare for a single important event, where man would scarcely have desired as many days; and this not from a lack of knowledge and power, but from the perfection of both. He took four thousand years to prepare the world for the advent of Christ, which late period is quietly denominated in the Bible, "the fulness of time!"

So also the entrance of Christ upon his public ministry was delayed until his thirtieth year, and he who was to be the great Teacher and Redeemer, was all that time laboring as a mechanic. What a waste of time! man is ready to exclaim. How unwise, that out of less than thirty-four years of life, thirty should be occupied with the work of a carpenter! How much better had he entered upon his spiritual labors at the age of twenty, so as to have secured ten years of added instruction for the people. God reasoned differently, and, anxious as he was to promote human salvation, operated slowly. For wise reasons, even though mysterious to us, he preferred that Christ should tarry at the carpenter's bench, until the fulness of time had once more arrived. And thus, my hearers, there is with reference to everything, a fulness of time; and while the heart should be interested in the rapid advancement of God's cause, it is the province of the head to see that cautious and well-digested measures are employed at precisely the right Christians are prone to be rash and inconsiderate in s to do good. Young men are often anxious to enter their efforts to do good. the ministry before they are thoroughly qualified as to maturity of mind, the discipline of their powers, or the extent of their know-They feel as though the world was perishing for lack of God's truth, and that it was necessary for them to rush at once into the ministerial office, as though God's cause rested solely upon them, and the exigencies of the world forbade delay. quite as much self-ignorance, self-conceit, and pride in such views, as there is holy zeal or piety. In like manner, churches are prone to rash measures and inconsiderate action. They first wrongly conclude that the whole work of glorifying God is embraced in the conversion of sinners, and then that that work must be done up by steam power in the shortest possible space of time. Hence that policy and method of action will be pursued which promises the greatest apparent results of this one kind, in the briefest period, no matter what other relations of life are disturbed or neglected, and consequently what other duties are overlooked or denied. It has been truly said, and odious as the sentiment has appeared to many in past days, I adopt and defend it, "that souls may be saved at too dear a rate." If God had not thought so, Christ would never have spent thirty years as a mechanic. Every theory of religious action which in its zeal for present conversions tramples upon the great interests and principles involved in other relations and duties of life, costs ultimately more than it pays. There is no need of violent, hot haste. Christ never exhibited it. He was always calm, self-possessed, deliberate, cautious, and attentive to every

class of interests, physical, mental, and spiritual—those of the body and those of the soul—those of a domestic, and those of a public

nature-those of time and those of eternity.

3. The subject suggests the thought, that true greatness and dignity reside in character, and not in social rank or relative em-The commonly-received opinion is in opposition to Men are regarded with reverence according to their wealth or rank, or the nature of their employment. Certain individuals are supposed to be entitled to regard and great outward respect, because they belong to the aristocracy of birth or of fortune, according as the country may be monarchical or republican. Others are thought to derive dignity and greatness from the peculiarity of their secular business, such as generals, judges, governors, legislators, presidents, and kings. So, on the other hand, the masses, who are of humble birth and laborious employments, are considered devoid of dignity and greatness. Common and almost universal as this doctrine is, it is equally absurd and antichristian. That the mere accident of birth, or the fact of relative position and employment, evinces the superiority of any man, is more than can be proved in a single case, while ten thousand facts abundantly disprove it in numberless instances. The Bible and common sense unite in declaring that true grandeur and nobility are found only in a pure character, and connect themselves only with the man who strives to glorify God, and to benefit his fellow-men to the best of his ability, in whatever station he may be placed by Providence. The humblest occupation becomes honorable and dignified, when made subservient to a right end. The Rev. John Newton remarked, that "True devotion equals things. Washing plates and cleaning shoes is a high office, if performed in a right spirit. If three angels were sent to earth, they would feel perfect indifference who should perform the part of prime minister, parish minister, or watchman." On another occasion, he observed, in a similar vein, that "If two angels came down from heaven to execute a divine command, and one was appointed to conduct an empire, and the other to sweep a street in it, they would feel no inclination to change employments." Peter the Great, autocrat of Russia, never was in so sublime a position, as when, in order to acquaint himself with ship-building, and to introduce it into his dominions, he went in disguise to the Dutch village of Saardam, and labored there as a common workman, in a shipyard, under the name of Peter Michaeloff. Paul laid aside none of his true dignity and greatness, when, in the intervals of his apostolic labor, he turned to his old trade of tentmaking, rather than be dependent on others. And thus the Lord Jesus Christ was as really evincing the grandeur of his character and person, while quietly laboring as a mechanic, as when, surrounded by entranced thousands, he rode in triumph into Jerusalem, or with divine power summoned the dead back to life. Angels, doubtless, gazed, year after year, with admiration on the Son of God, as he veiled his glory in human form, and as an unpretending carpenter toiled amid the rough artisans of Nazareth. He was in the path of duty, and that is the path of greatness. His religion consisted not in attention to mere devotional exercises, such as prayer, singing, and attendance upon the synagogues, but it was the constant development of this sublime principle, to please God in every act of life. Hence, when he knew it was his heavenly Father's will that he should spend thirty years as a carpenter, he perfectly acquiesced in the arrangement. That was holiness, and that was also greatness, which would not have been increased had a crown been placed upon his head. Imitate this true, heroic grandeur, my hearers.

"Let foplings sneer, let fools deride, Ye heed no idle scorner; Free hands and hearts are still your pride, And duty done, your honor."

4. It is a noticeable fact, that God often brings the grand actors of earth, those who mould human affairs, and leave their impress upon succeeding generations, from obscure positions. Had it been announced to the Jewish nation that their Messiah was in the world, they would never have thought of looking for him among the common people, and above all among those of Nazareth, who were supposed to be unusually devoid of ability. And yet there stood the Son of God, the Founder of a religion that has swaved for centuries the most enlightened nations of the earth, and is yet destined to become universal—there he stood, in the person of that humble carpenter, who wrought with such diligent industry by the side of his reputed father. And thus, centuries before, when God would anoint a king who should cause Israel to triumph over all its enemies, he sent Samuel the prophet to Bethlehem, and there, from the family of Jesse, chose the youngest, the mere stripling, who kept the sheep. When the Saviour had finished his work on earth, and would send forth a band of Apostles to lay the foundations of the church in all lands, whom did he choose, but a company of fishermen, gathered from the common people of Galilee? When, more than fourteen centuries after, he would reveal a new world to the astonished nations, and with it would start into new life the enterprise, commerce, arts, sciences, and religion of Europe, whom did he select as the grand pioneer, but Christopher Columbus, the son of a wool-comber, and in early life a sailor-boy upon the Mediter-When, a few years later, he would kindle anew the fires of truth and piety, amid the blackness of Romish night, and thus throw light over the world, who was designated to bear the torch of reformation, but Martin Luther, an obscure monk, and the son of a poor miner? I need not multiply examples. History is full of them, and whole volumes have been written to illustrate this providential arrangement. The middle and lower classes have, in fact, always been the hope of the world, and from them have uprisen those benefactors of the race, who, as champions of the truth, have driven error from its strongholds. They are the vast storehouse of material, from which God draws forth, from time to time, the stout hearts and the mighty intellects that are needed to save and bless the world. The Jews despised the carpenter, who presumed to take upon him the office of Rabbi, and, as John informs us, contemptuously said, "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?" But God, who was in him, made him the most

illustrious of teachers and the mightiest of monarchs.

5. Contempt for the poor and laborious, as such, is a sign of a weak head and of a wicked heart. There are not a few in every large community, who look with contempt upon the laboring classes, as though to be an operative were a disgrace. They consider labor disreputable, and idleness a mark of gentility. A mechanic is regarded with aversion, and denied his true social position. Who. among the rich men, thinks of inviting a mechanic and his family to a party, or of exchanging visits with them? What young lady, who counts herself refined, associates with the daughters of operatives, or would marry a mechanic? What! throw herself away on a mechanic, instead of marrying a merchant, or lawyer, or phy-Absurd! Now, I will admit that there is no impropriety in persons of education and refinement preferring the society of the cultivated and well-informed, and were it only the ignorance and rudeness of certain individuals that was avoided, no blame could be imputed; but it is not so. Very frequently, a mechanic, who is intelligent and truly cultivated and Christian, is denied a respectable social position, while some ignorant and dissipated dandy, who, like every idle man, is a nuisance in society, is honored and caressed. The truth is the very reverse of the views which usually prevail. He who is employed in a useful occupation, by which his family are honestly supported, and the general industry and thrift of the community are promoted, is worthy of respect and honor. He is adding something continually to the wealth of the world. What may be the precise nature of his business is of no account, whether he weave cotton cloth, or sell it; whether he shapes the glowing iron on the anvil, or offers it for sale in a hardware store; whether he makes shoes or sermons, repairs garments or mends shattered constitutions, tinkers metal or the state laws. A man ought to be judged and treated according to his moral worth, in the first place, and secondly according to the degree of his intelligence and cultivation; while mere wealth, office, family connections, dress, and foppish manners, should sink into their proper insignificance. What would these aristocratic despisers of mechanical labor have thought of Christ? For thirty years, he was nothing but a carpenter, not a very peculiar carpenter, a very genteel one-a master builder, perhaps-but a plain, humble, laboring joiner, who used the plane, the chisel, the saw, and the hammer—a man with rough hands, and in very ordinary clothes. Think you they would have received him? Would they have nodded to him in the street? Would they have invited him to their social parties? I tell you, nay, Even after he had become a preacher of righteousness, they would have exclaimed with those in the text, "Is not this the carpenter?" and would have turned with disgust from his presence. And what shall we say, when this unreasonable and unchristian prejudice against the laboring classes is carried into the church of God, so that professors of religion refuse to unite with a church where mechanics attend? It is often the case, that those who profess to be the followers of Christ will pass right by a church that needs their aid, and in which they can make their influence felt, and can do much good, and will go to another church, where they are not needed, and where their influence is lost in the crowd; because the former is attended by the poor, and the latter by the rich! Christ do so? Do these proud professors really love him who was the carpenter of Nazareth, and who, even after he commenced his public ministry, was so poor that he had not where to lay his head? I tell you, my hearers, that if the Lord Jesus were to revisit the earth, he would consort with the poor rather than with the rich. Yes: and according to his own declaration, he who was for years a laborious mechanic, setting his fellow-men an example of industry, is now represented on earth by the laboring poor of his people; and he has said, with reference to their treatment, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." The whole system now so fully developed in our large cities, of building churches exclusively for the rich, separating them from the poor, is wrong, and the spirit of it, as exhibited in almost every city, is equally unchristian.

6. Christianity is the special friend of the laboring classes. Its divine Founder when on earth identified himself with the poor. He was for thirty years one with them, in toil and hardship, amid contempt and injury. During his public ministry he devoted special attention to that class, so that we read that "the common people heard him gladly," and that it was said of his labors, "The poor have the gospel preached unto them." The whole spirit of the gospel tends to bless the laboring classes. It comforts them under trials, encourages them amid toil, rebukes all attempts to defraud or oppress them, and tends to elevate their condition and to augment their happiness. He who was himself a mechanic has given to the world a religion for the million, and in all ages they have cheerfully responded to it, while the rich and powerful have perished in their pride. Christ said that "it was easier for a camel to pass through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven," while James declared that "God hath chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him." How little is this genius of Christianity understood. Ministers and churches are continually striving to adapt it to the rich and powerful, so as to gain their favor, overlooking the poor who are the hope of the church. What cause of God has not been carried forward mainly by the poor, the middle and lower classes? What cause of God have not the rich and great opposed and vainly sought to crush? And yet the sympathies of many ministers and laymen is altogether with the latter. Such is not the spirit of Christianity. That gives its sympathies to those who need them, the toiling, struggling masses.

7. Let each learn to serve God contentedly in the calling in which Providence has placed him. Christ was willing to serve him the revenly feether.

his Heavenly Father in any capacity, and willingly wrought for thirty years as a carpenter. We are prone to make a distinction in employments, as though some were holier than others; but, relatively to each man, his own proper business is the holiest, for it is the one which Providence has assigned, and in which God is best pleased with his labors. Thus Paul reasons, warning his readers against discontent, "Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called. Art thou called being a servant? care not for it; but if thou mayest be made free use it rather. For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman; likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ's servant." The particular employment is not so important, although some are more pleasant and profitable than others, as that it be pursued diligently honestly, and for the glory of God, according to our Saviour's ex-In the language of one of our favorite poets, let us say ample. and feel-

"In the darkness as in daylight,
On the water as on land,
God is ever looking on us,
And beneath us is His hand!
Death will find us soon or later,
On the deck or in the cot,
And we cannot meet him better
Than in working out our lot."

### THE WAGES OF SIN.

"The wages of sin is death." Punishment follows close in the footsteps of crime. Sin and death are intimately allied. Eternal death is the eldest child of sin. In life, the wages of sin is material death; in eternity, perpetual exile from the presence of God, or everlasting destruction. When we sin, we close our eyes to the light; we are blind to the established fact, that the stipend of transgression is never-ending death—that the hire of sin is the loss of When we break the laws of God, we write our own epitaphs; we follow in the funeral train of our own eternal hopes; we abandon the contest and invite destruction; we acknowledge that we are sold to the Evil One, and court the wrath of God. Terrible aberration of mind.

The precursors of this dreadful death are, unsanctified sorrows; sickness which hath no spiritual consolations; poverty darkened by despair, and a keen and abiding sense of the loss of innocence, dear as breath at the hour of dying. A German philosopher once remarked, that he knew of but two beautiful things in the universe—the starry sky above our heads, and a sense of

duty in our hearts.

This consciousness of guilt, or loss of innocence, is the frontier herald of eternal death. It springs from the recollection of a thousand solemn warnings-from parents and friends, from school-masters and holy ministers, from pulpits and Sabbaths, from open Bibles and the invocations of the pious, and finally, from the merciful visitations of Providence, almost periodical. Eternal hopes, the soul appears to have none; it only awaits the "wrath and indignation" which shall devour the adversary.

If such are the wages of sin, how shall we avoid the payment of them? Simple, yet beautiful and consolatory is the gospel reply, "But the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Can I then avoid the wages of sin, and accept through the Holy Spirit, of the gift of God, exchanging eternal death for eternal life? Can I become an inmate of the kingdom of heaven, and escape the most dreadful of all evils, "the wrath to come?" Thanks

be to God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

#### VII.

### ROBBING GOD.

#### A FAST-DAY SERMON.

## BY REV. E. N. KIRK,

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"Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me."-MAL. iii. 8.

THE rights of property are held sacred by every civilized people. and, the dishonest appropriation of property held in trust, is a crime which they agree to abhor. But there is a species of robbery, or, more specifically, a breach of trust, which even civilized nations have not learned to condemn. It is that so severely rebuked in this passage; which we may denominate an indictment against a corporation of stewards. To understand it fully, we must refer to some peculiarities in the social organization of the There is a remarkable connection here presented to our view, between temporal blessings and religious ceremonies, and a visiting of temporal judgments upon religious delinquencies is here threatened; which are not witnessed now. And there is also an importance attached here to sacrificial services, which, we are sure, was not founded on their intrinsic value. The Jewish government was entirely unique. Their God and their monarch were the same person; so that his moral government over them assumed a political form; and sins against the moral law were equally sins against the civil law. This explains the threatenings of temporal judgments for religious delinquencies. Here, for instance, were a drought and famine sent upon them for neglecting the services of religion. Under the dispensation of grace in the New Testament, it seems to many wonderful that so much importance could ever have been attached to the sacrifice of animals. But, besides the support of the whole religious system of the nation, which depended chiefly on the altar gifts; and, besides the typical value, or the profound instruction imparted by them in reference to the great doctrine of atonement, they were a loyal expression of homage to their Sovereign. And when the fire consumed the precious offering, it was a beautiful expression of God's acceptance of the gift, and of his festive participation with man in APL

trust.

the fruits of the divine bounty. Any abatement of zeal, therefore, in this department of civil and religious duty, was a virtual departing from their King and God; a species of constructive rebellion, which required a prompt and intelligible expression of the divine displeasure. The prophet Malachi therefore comes, as king's sheriff,

to read the indictment in the hearing of the nation.

And now for a few moments we may be spectators of the trial. There had not been an utter abandonment of the forms of worship. But they had offered polluted bread on the altars of the Lord; they had betrayed an utter heartlessness in their ceremonies; they had turned the whole system of religion into a matter of commerce: they had brought the lame, and the sick, and the torn, to the sacrifice; they had withheld the King's tax, or the tithes on their produce. "Ye have robbed me," saith God. "Wherein?" is their reply. "In tithes and offerings." "But, we are visited with fam. ine, and our flocks are cut off; how can we continue our rich offerings? Our herds and our corn have failed, how can be expect us to bring the best of our small produce in offerings to his temple? Let him now bless us again with abundance; and then will we bring again the tithes into the storehouse." This is their rejoinder. But hear the King's Attorney again; "You plead the consequences of your sin as the cause of it. Ye are cursed with a curse for this very reason, that when ye had abundance ye became selfish, and irreligious, and disloyal. This poverty, of which you now complain, would not have come upon you, had you not first forsaken Now, therefore, I come to plead the Lord's cause with you. There is yet room for a reconciliation with your offended sovereign, and for a reparation of this injury. Cease to plead falsely and vainly, to vindicate yourselves. Acknowledge your own delinquencies and God's justice; and now return to him. Yea, poor as you are, embarrassing as the course may be, meet his righteous claims. Bring the tithes into his storehouse; and see what your gracious Sovereign will do for you. You say you are willing to do your duty; that you do not wish nor intend to rob God. But you complain of poverty. Now bring the tithes; come, do your duty. Do not sit waiting for better times, but take the best you have, and bring it to the temple, and put the Lord to the test. Come, make the experiment, and see who is properly the cause of this curse and barrenness; the Lord or yourselves. Come, do your duty, though it takes your last stay from under you; and then see if he will not meet you and bless you."

Our attention is called in this passage to two facts pertaining to ourselves—that of God's exclusive ownership, and our breach of

I. God is the exclusive owner of us and our possessions, faculties, and opportunities.

What is ownership? A supreme right to enjoy the use of an

object according to one's own will. It is absolute, when no limit, but that will, exists. It is limited, when the rights of others put certain bounds to the right of use. Still the right of property is even then exclusive, as far as it goes. It is founded on a gift of the Creator—direct or indirect—as in the possession of our own faculties, a right to the air and the light of heaven; or to the returns of a bounteous Providence to the labor of our minds or bodies. It is also founded on a transfer of rights from some other owner, by gift, will, exchange, wages, or inheritance. These are the principal foundations of human ownership. God's are as different, and as much more elevated, as his nature is separate from, and lifted above ours. He has founded the laws of his empire upon his universal, absolute, and exclusive ownership. He has vindicated his treatment of his creatures by it; and he has condescended to show us the foundations of that right of property in everything

that exists, and especially man.

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1. The first is creation.—" The Lord hath made all things for Of him, and through him, and to him are all things." That formula contains this principle in a brief, clear, and simple maxim, which ought to be repeated every day by every human being. And on that principle he vindicates his sovereign disposal of man: "Have I not a right to do what I will with mine own!" There are but two qualifications to this absolute proprietorship recognized in the scriptures. The one is, the restraint of those eternal principles of justice, to which it is the pleasure and the glory of Jehovah to conform. He has conferred certain rights on man, by endowing him with rational faculties and a responsible agency. These rights he will ever sacredly regard, in all his dealings with man. The other restriction is, that God's absolute proprietorship does not exclude a full proprietorship in particular things, to be vested in individual man. Still it is strictly stewardship, rather than ownership. The other foundation of this property is.

2. Redemption.—Some regard the death of Christ, as having no literal redemptive efficacy. But this is very certain, that he claims a special property in man on the ground of his having died for us. "To this end, Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living. He died for all, that they which live, should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them." This seems to be the reason for a special application of the title of Lord to him. He is the King of kings, and Lord of lords. All dominion, authority, power and

property are subordinate to his dominion and ownership.

What then does the absolute owner claim of those in whom he has vested the possession, temporary or permanent, of property? That every one count himself a steward, and be faithful in his stewardship or agency. "No man liveth to himself; living or departed, we are the Lord's." His ends are to be accomplished by

us, to the sacrifice of all inferior ends. The power and possessions then entrusted to men, to be by them employed, each according to his ability, are various. And the proper use of them requires their

entire consecration to God. They are

The supreme affection of the heart. There appears perhaps something incongruous in speaking of love to God as a matter of obligation. And yet it is the sum of all duty. It is the life of all other duties; without which God can accept of nothing. It is a very prevalent feeling with men, however, that there is nothing of any great moment in that summary of the law, "Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God with all thy heart." Yet this is the first requirement of creatures whom he has endowed with faculties to apprehend and love him. This, so far from being secondary to any other

duty, is paramount to all.

He claims the entire control of our wills. This is not to annihilate our wills; but to bring his outward law to supersede all inward impulses. The will cannot act independently of motive. The Law of God, as expressing his will, is one motive; the self-originating desires and purposes are another. To choose between these two, includes the sum of human responsibility, whether the choice is in view of the two objects in their most general form, or of any particular duty drawing in one direction, and inclination drawing in another direction. The claim of our Creator is, that we choose his law to control us in all things. He has the same claim to secure that result from his rational creatures, as man has to secure from a tree the peculiar fruit which it is capable of producing.

He claims our supreme confidence in him as our Saviour. This is a point not generally regarded in the light of an obligation. Every man who has heard the gospel with any degree of confidence in its being a message from God, believes that he has a right to look to God as a Saviour, if he is disposed to do so. But it is not common for men to feel the pressure of an obligation upon them to believe in Christ with supreme and grateful confidence. Yet this is his claim; and it is only another form of requiring supreme love, in view of this new aspect of divine character.

He claims the supreme efforts of men to advance his kingdom, and promote his glory on earth; each according to his capacity and opportunity. As the prayer is to be daily on our lips and in our hearts, "thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as in heaven; thy name be hallowed," so are we to be "always abounding in the work of the Lord." The spirit of loyalty must put itself forth in destroying the kingdom of Satan, by diffusing the light of heavenly truth, by sustaining and extending the institutions of religion, in every way in our power.

This is the required result of the agency and property with which God, our Creator, Redeemer, King, has entrusted us; this is the

return which he expects from us.

We are then prepared to contemplate-

II. Man's fraudulent appropriation to himself of God's treasures.

It is seen-

1. In his theory of morals.—The importance of the doctrine of ownership is almost universally conceded. A large portion of the duties of social life refer to accurate distinctions on this subject. Human laws are constructed with the utmost care and wisdom. to fix the rights of ownership and determine precisely the limits of each man's property. If laws are wrong on this point, they trouble the order of society; if men's notions are wrong, or their sentiments lax on this subject, everything is out of order with them in their business transactions. Lax doctrines in regard to property are among the most dangerous influences in society. They sap its very foundations. If this subject had not been well understood by the framers of our constitution and laws, society, as it is in England and America, could not have existed. And as the heavens are higher than the earth, so is the importance of correct views of God's ownership on earth, above correct notions of property among men. And as it is found in human affairs that the most dreadful form of fraud and robbery is that which is founded on principle, and so carries public sentiment and the individual conscience with it, so is it in regard to the common notions men have of morality, virtue, honor and goodness. The true doctrine of God's supreme ownership is almost banished from human be-High-minded, honorable men, that would die rather than betray a trust reposed in them, or fraudulently appropriate that which belongs to another, or to fail to meet the righteous claims of another, have no scruple in consulting their own feelings about the use of their time, property and talents, without the least reference to God. In a word, they have practically adopted the principle that God has no right to our affections, our service, our influence. It may be prudent to give such attention to religion as shall seem to be necessary for our own future welfare; but that is all the importance there is in it, in their estimation. The idea of a day of judgment, when they will be tried by a standard more rigid than what they esteem the fanatical requirements of the pulpit, is to them preposterous. It will never be required of them, they think, to have been as zealous in the cause of Christ as Paul; as fervent in love to him as John; as laborious and self-denying as the early martyrs. They have claims on God, very great; but he has none, or almost none, on them. This is the condition to which a fraudulent race has come. But are these notions true and just? Is it that God has given up all claim to us, our love and our service? If so, we should show the quit-claim, and thus answer all demands and accusations. I ask for it, where is it written; who ever heard it uttered? Produce your witnesses. Does it run thus: "I Jehovah, the maker of men, their unwearied benefactor, in whom they live and move, and have their being, I do hereby annul, abolish and forever abandon all title. right, claim and demand to the supreme and fervent love of my intelligent creatures. They need not show me anything more than a decent respect; they need not depend particularly on my son for their salvation; nor labor very earnestly to spread his kingdom in the world. They shall not be required to pray very fervently for the outpouring of my Spirit and the coming of my kingdom. I do not require them to be much concerned about any other laws than those which preserve the order of civil society. I promise to defend their rights of property with all the power of my throne; and I will require of them to be very scrupulous, and exact, and honorable, about the rights of property between man and man; but my own rights I utterly and forever abandon, and I will never exact of them any regard to these rights. They may live so far as if there were no God, and no such thing as obligation to him; and if they only act honorably in all their transactions with men, I promise to welcome them to heaven?" One would be led to think, to see how sober-minded men live in regard to their Maker and Saviour, that they had seen or heard such a proclamation. But, if they have not, whence do they obtain those lax notions, so prevalent on this subject? Where do we find the popular notions about the rights of property? The ablest writers trace them to these four sources—instinctive sentiment—the history of civilization— —the nature of property—the scriptures. But every one of these witnesses speaks, just as distinctly, some of them with abundantly more fulness in favor of God's right, than in favor of man's. Of the scriptures it would be almost superfluous to speak. They explain and defend man's rights; but with what majesty, solemnity and authority, do they assert that "all things, are of him and to him. who is over all, God blessed forevermore!" Refer we to the nature of the case. You go back to search for man's right of property; and you must at last come to God. Human law must rest for its foundation on natural religion, and on the law of Moses. which is the law of God. He conferred all the title man has to anything. Then his ownership is at last the foundation of all other ownership.

The claims of Jesus, the Lord of Redemption, are yet scarcely known in this world; much less admitted into its code of morals. The guilt of not believing on him is very rarely acknowledged. The robbery of not being a true and zealous disciple and servant of Christ is not believed very generally to be such. And yet men quite extensively hope that Christ will somehow save them at last. But they must all one day understand, that to reject Christ as Lord, is to reject him as Saviour. Conscience must be brought to the same sensitiveness in regard to God's rights, as man's. We shall then have no more worldly, Christless morality and self-complacent, applauded selfishness. But, if the theory of the world is bad,

2. Its practice is still worse.—Under this charge we must, in justice, make a division. There is a class who are guilty of robbing God, without any qualification or cessation. Another class are guilty to some extent. The first includes those who have some belief in God's existence as our Creator and benefactor. They cannot believe that he created them for no purpose. they know that it is not that to which they are devoting their lives. Now there are three several ways of violating the rights of property-theft, violence, fraud. An agent generally does it by the first method; which is, secretly appropriating to his own use that which has been entrusted to him for the benefit of his employer. This is precisely what is going on continually in the world toward God. Every nine men out of every ten you meet, are probably stealing from God everything he has put within their power. us look at the inventory. He gave them hearts for fervent religious affections; devout communings with him, fervent aspirings after him; hearts capable of overflowing with delight and gratitude, especially at the exhibition of his mercy in Christ. But the probability is, that this proportion of the persons who pass you in the street, have never once seriously purposed to give their Creator and Saviour the full tribute of their heart's warmest affections. He demands the employment of their time for cultivating that holiness which chiefly pleases and honors him. But time is laid out, as if man were the original and sole owner and proprietor of it. He demands the consecration of all our social influence to promote his kingdom in the world. If that influence consists in wealth, station, talent, or any other instrument of power, what we have we hold as stewards. And whoever is appropriating them to selfish ends, or at best only to promote the temporal welfare of man, is robbing his employer; and if he denies that he is, he makes the case only the more hopeless.

Our position amid religious privileges, constitutes a part of our "To whom much is given, of him shall much be required." Every human being in this and other lands where the Gospel shines freely, is responsible for his opportunities. He has the word of God, the Lord's day, the preaching of the Gospel, the prayers of the children of God, precious time and precious oppor-They are given him that he may become a truly penitent believer in Christ; that he may consecrate himself unreservedly to Christ, and faithfully serve him. It is not difficult, then, to believe that the King is robbed of his revenue most extensively in this community. Yes, even of those who know that they must at last come to Christ, to put their whole reliance on him, almost all are making the calculation to defer submitting to his dominion to a period when it can be of no service to him in this world, but when they think they shall want his aid in the next. This is the calculation of the warm-hearted youth, of the graver man, and of the advancing in old age. This is robbing God. The particular instances of fraud practised every moment and everywhere, would fill volumes of description. These are the germs of all the rest; God is robbed of the heart, of the will, of the time, of the influence; in a word, of everything. And in these cases it is unqualified, unceasing robbery, disguised as it may be.

But there are also instances of it on a more limited scale within the church. There is a general and sincere surrender to Christ. But when it comes to particular instances of subordinating personal will, and feelings, and interests, to the will of Christ, and the interests of his kingdom, there is a drawback, a refusal to meet the employer's draft, and honor it by acceptance. The steward has so many private interests to promote, so many worldly interests of his family to promote, so much worldly business to occupy his time, that he can do very little for Christ, and must make his service and glory very subordinate objects.

If any one acquainted with the rights of property, and the principles of business among honorable men, will carry those principles into the church, and examine the state of the affairs of all these stewards of the most high God, he will find a vast laxness of principle, and still more of practice. The highest attainment of a large number is, to secure a comfortable degree of hope that they shall not fail of heaven in the end. The strong sense of responsibility Time, property, speech, influence over seems to be wanting. other minds, appear to be regarded as instruments of personal gratification, rather than property sacredly entrusted for infinitely higher ends than a momentary gratification, or the exaltation of ourselves and those connected with us. There is reason to fear that few bring themselves to a strict account, reviewing at suitable intervals their course of action, their motives and principles. fear that few prepare their accounts for the great day of inspection, when the Lord shall return, and require his own with usury. see some improvement in the use of money. But still there are other clear indications that a large part of the King's property is "buried in napkins," or squandered in self-indulgence. There are heads, hearts, and hands in the church, as well as out of it, that seem not to belong to the Lord, but to the steward.

But we may go no farther in these specifications. There can be no question that the charge lies as justly against us as against the Jews three hundred years before the Christian era. But, if these principles be true, then

#### INFERENCES.

1. There is much occasion for this day and its peculiar services.

Many see no occasion for fasting and humiliation, at any time. Some think it out of season now, in a season of great prosperity. But they misapprehend the design of this exercise, supposing it to have reference to sufferings, and not to sins; to be designed for times of distress, and not for times of wickedness; for getting rid of trouble, and not for forsaking rebellion. Perhaps the times of great outward prosperity are more suitable even than times of affliction, for such services and exercises as occupy us this day. God is patiently bearing with us, and richly blessing us; but we may be turning our mercies into judgments. We have abundant occasion to repent, all of us, in view of our great dishonesty and dishonorable treatment of God. And we had better fast and humble ourselves, and plead for mercy, before the day of darkness and terror is brought upon us. No nation, at this day, is more favored of God than this. No people are under so great obligations to serve and glorify him. But though we make our nest in Carmel. his hand can find us out, We, favored as we now are, may come under the curse. Nations do come under it, even in this day. No more striking proof of it need be given, than is found in the condition of the Jews for eighteen centuries. They seem to exist in their indestructible distinctness, just to show an example of a nation punished for disobedience to God. But a greater evil than all is the withdrawment of God's Holy Spirit. This may be our And can we bear it? What is the life of our souls? it the sunshine of worldly prosperity and human favor? Is it the increase of corn and wine? Is it health and success? Is it the vast progress of science, and the wonderful advance of human society in intelligence and comfort? None of all these. It is the indwelling of God's Holy Spirit. We want it for ourselves, supremely want it. What progress we may make in the divine life, by his gracious aid; how certainly we shall falter and fail, if he in anger leaves us! What a public and social blessing lies yet enfolded in the hand of that blessed Being! He has light for benighted souls; clear vision for the doubting; relief for the tempted; power for the weak; pardon and peace for the penitent; yea, penitence for the impenitent; aid for the praying; salvation for the soul. Our robberies have provoked God to withdraw that Spirit to some extent from us. And he may go still farther. We have then abundant occasion for observing this day; and to make it a day of the deepest humiliation, and penitence, and prayer. For God has said, he will return and bless us. Our work to-day is repentance; a solemn review of our dishonest and dishonorable treatment of God; an earnest purpose of being in all future time more faithful to our trust. Let each one take up this indictment before the bar of his own conscience, and there suffer the King's witnesses to testify, as in his presence. Let each ask himself what has been entrusted to him; what instructions the Lord has given as to the employment of it; and whether he has so employed it; and how all this will appear when the case is tried in open court, at the great assizes of the universe—the great day of over and terminer, hearing and settling the matter forever. But, at the same time, it must not be forgotten, that day has not yet come. The trial is now at the private bar of conscience. Remember the design of that trial. If God can cast you there, then mercy triumphs. It seems to many a formidable process, which is to terminate in their destruction, if the charge of robbing God is sustained. No; it is a prosecution instigated at the suggestion of our Redeemer; to be tried at this tribunal, that we may there be brought to self-condemnation. If he succeed, and can bring us to cast ourselves on the mercy of God, we may be pardoned and saved. What is then your plea in view of the evidence your Judge-Advocate has brought? Is your plea, "Not guilty?" Wherein have we robbed God?" If you persevere in that, there is but one course left for him. He will transfer the cause to the King's Bench. Before that august tribunal you will be put upon your defence for your And "who may abide the day of his coming!" Shall it be a contest of force? Man is weak, and God is strong. Shall it be a contest of argument? God is wise, and man is a fool in his wis-Shall it be an appeal to right and the public conscience? God is just, and who can contend with him and prosper? Now, a door of hope is open. Then, only that of destruction will be seen by each guilty wretch that has dared to meet the issues of that trial on the merits of the case. Let each one then plead "Guilty." We cannot contest the principle with God. His ownership is a fact incontestable, a right inalienable, a jewel of his crown with which The agreement of robbers to think their nefarihe will not part. ous course a justifiable, a respectable, and honorable mode of promoting their own interests, does not make it such. None of us can offer an apology for our defaulting, even as plausible as that of There is not the semblance of a reason why we should not personally and thoroughly consecrate ourselves to the service of God; why we should not daily be bringing him the tribute of obedience, of praise, of service; why we should not actively and efficiently be engaged in building up the kingdom of Christ in To say that it did not belong to us to do it, is to vindicate the principle of covering a fraud by denying the obligation to do with an employer's property that for which he entrusted us Let us rather plead "guilty." There is then a personal necessity for this day, as well as a public necessity; a need of it for men in the church, and men out of the church. It should be a season of earnest heart-searching inquiry into our condition and prospects as individuals; a time of personal humiliation, confession to God, and sincere repentance.

2. We see too, if there be such a general ground for this charge, that each one has a personal interest in the moral and religious

condition of the community and the nation.

There are personal considerations, as well as more exalted and disinterested motives, for our considering the public guilt of robbing God as a personal burden to our consciences.

We have participated in the general guilt. Our example as unfaithful stewards, as purloiners of the King's revenue, has had its in-We are a part of a community of robbers—not robbers of men, but infinitely worse!—of God. By our selfish appropriation of time, property and influence, others have been emboldened. We have encouraged the young to sacrifice the precious fragrance of their youthful affection at the shrines of fashion and of folly. It seems to us a horrid spectacle, to witness a heathen or a Catholic mother carrying her little child to mutter a Latin charm before a wooden statue. But has there been no such desecration among Has not our example taught them to give their best time and their best affections to the world, whose "friendship," God has declared to be "enmity with" him! Just so far as we have been carrying out the selfish principle of appropriating God's property to our own uses, we have been encouraging others to do the same. No one can tell what a restraining influence his example would have exerted, had he been faithful to God and to his own sacred trust. Our spirit has silently spread itself like leaven, affecting other minds, where we have not suspected it. We have withheld from the world a mighty restraining influence of prayer; which withholding has contributed to increase the general wickedness. We have been thoughtless, when we should have been mourning over the prevalent dishonesty. And this day the community in which we live, the nation of which we form a part, is just so much the more guilty for our having done wrong, and neglected our duty.

And moreover it meets us personally at another point. We shall share in the judgments which God may send upon the guilty The day of national retribution has not ceased with the Jewish polity. It is showing itself in the reeling and staggering of those communities into whose hands God is now putting the cup of his indignation. Our turn may soon come. There are more instruments of punishment reserved for the ungodly. Neither the deluge, nor the fiery storm on Sodom have exhausted them. Babvlon and Tyre. Jerusalem and Laodicea, may not stand alone in their terrible history. Men seem to think that, because civilization and art are advanced to such high degrees of perfection and power, we are getting out of God's reach. He used to shoot with a bow and But we are now arrow-proof, and can laugh, like Leviathan, "at the shaking of a spear." Hear the language of a modern lec-"Pain is the unhappy lot of animal vitality. It has borne down the strongest intellect and sapped and withered the affec-The metaphysician finds in it the secret springs of one half of human action; the moralist proclaims it as the impending retribution of terrestrial sin; the strongest figure of the Bible condemns man to eternal flames; and yet this 'dreaded misery, the worst of evils,' now lies prostrate at the feet of science." Would you have conceived of it, that science has deprived God of the power of punishing sin! And what is the wonderful discovery? It is another Babel. They were wonderful men that discovered masonry, and built a mighty tower, to keep the next deluge God might send, "prostrate at the feet of science," and the scientific builders. Now, it is chloroform. So that, in the language of the lecturer, "physical suffering is not the mundane retribution of transgression." The meaning of which is, we have gone so fast and so far, that those old instruments of God's justice cannot overtake us. I should not here have introduced the remarks of one man, if I had not regarded them as embodying the spirit of the age; as one of the symptoms of that pride which goeth before destruction, that haughtiness which precedes and procures a fall. God can punish in number-less ways—in our bodies, our families, our estates, our minds, our country. Oceans of chloroform cannot extinguish the pains of his dreadful judgments. And they who make such boasts, may have some fearful proofs of this in their own experience.

Zeal for God, and for our country too, urge us to look into this subject, and repent and confess for the church and the nation, as well as for ourselves. We need hardly turn our thoughts to the wrongs of the slave. We need scarcely think of the wandering, weeping, broken-hearted red man. We need not recall scenes enacted on Sunday morning in the closing of the session of our great national legislature. Our police records, the condition of our juvenile population, the robbery of holy time, a thousand signs infallibly indicate that we are provoking God at least to withdraw his blessings. But I think the most alarming of all symptoms is that which has been already mentioned—the diminished dread of God's anger. To save the world from moral ruin, he must break up that atheism. And

if material suffering be needed, he will send it.

But why dwell on that? There is a still higher motive to repentance, personal and national. It is suggested in the context: "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in my house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it." Can this nation rise to the height of believing that its glory is, to be faithful stewards of God's property? The doctrine of God's exclusive ownership is very unwelcome to selfishness. It would break up all worldliness, if fully believed. But it leaves a perfect and ample sphere for human ownership. It gives dignity and sacredness to that ownership. It takes away the danger and meanness of being rich; the temptation to an excessive desire of wealth. It constitutes the true value of time, talents, wealth, accomplishments, attainments and influence.

Could we contribute to produce this conviction in the public mind; to produce a change in men's estimate of themselves, their time, their possessions, their influence, their responsibility, what a blessed result would certainly follow. Until it does take place, God must have a controversy with men; it cannot be otherwise. Hear it, ye

stewards of the most high God, ye are robbing him, and justifying your fraud. You must change your opinions, feelings and practice. Then the blessing will come. Heaven's windows shall be opened. There is a glorious river of blessing on the other side; but it cannot get through. The curse has closed the flood-gates. Repentance and obedience will open them. That is the design of this day. Let it be the beginning of changes in us, and it will be the beginning of changes in God's dealings with us.

### VIII.

### CHRISTIAN UNION.

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"Whereas there is among you envying, strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?"—1 Con, iii, 3.

THERE are many very important principles of truth laid down in this divine testimony, which deserve our most serious considera-The fundamental principle evidently is, that unity is a mark of true religion; -and that unity in true religion is the work of God, the mark of God's people, and the proper object of pursuit, for those who would honor him and build up his spiritual Church. On the other hand, divisions among the professed supporters of the Gospel are represented as carnal in their origin and influence, and conformed only to the will and habits of men, in the course to which they lead. It is unity in religion, of which the Apostle speaks, other subjects being wholly excluded from the consideration. And it is unity especially, in the religion of the Gospel, other shapes and forms of religion being equally shut out of view. This religious unity among men, is the end, to which the real operation of the Gospel tends. And wherever the Gospel rules alone, unmolested and unperverted by earthly influence, and the corrupting plans of men, the actual result of its operation, is this unity of which the Apostle speaks. Wherever there are seen and found, divisions in opposition to this Christian unity, and envying and strife attending upon these divisions, and arising out of them, they are, and they are to be considered, the evidence of the interference of another power, entirely diverse from that of the Gospel, and operating in direct opposition to it. If among any bodies of professed Christians, or within any such body separately considered, there be divisions, envying and strife, we are therefore authorized to say of them, "they are carnal, and walk as men."

The Saviour's purpose and prayer for his disciples was, that they might be one. One, in the strictest and most entire sense, in which intelligent and independent beings could be united;—"as thou Father in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us." That his real disciples are therefore one, and must always be one, in the sense to which his mind was directed in this prayer, cannot be doubted, without questioning his ability to accomplish the result for which he prayed, and thus unsettling the whole stability and prospect of the Gospel and the Church of God. That his Gospel is really adapted and competent in the ministration of the Holy Spirit, to produce this projected unity, can no more be questioned, without denying the Saviour's ability to frame an instrument, competent and adapted to attain the end which he desired and proposed. But what is the testimony of facts in this case? Has this Gospel ever produced among men, anything which may be considered as the unity here specified? Is there such an unity within our reach, as a visible and practicable object of pursuit? These are questions involving much that is of great practical consequence to us. As such, I would consider them.

I. What is this unity in religion to which our text refers, and the

opposites to which it so severely reproves?

It is most evidently, not a mere intellectual unity, an agreement, however perfect, in every view of religious doctrine; that is, an entire uniformity of religious sentiment. Such an unity as this, is not possible among unequal minds. Unless every single mind is supposed to have attained an entire, and an equally perfect view of religious truth, it is impossible to imagine an entire uniformity of religious sentiments pervading them. Every step in the progress of spiritual study and acquirement opens, not only new truths to view, but also, which is a fact of equal consequence, new relations of actual truths to each other. There is an intellectual perspective, as well as a physical one; in the opening of which, as the mind proceeds on its journey in science, the whole landscape continually changes; distances, proportions, relations successively come forth to view; past impressions are relinquished, and new ones are received; judgments formed upon partial consideration are renounced, and general convictions including and modifying them in every variety of shape are formed. There are involved in the very progress of the mind in the study of the Gospel, new conceptions of truth, and varying conceptions of the truth every day.

"Light after light, well used, they shall attain."

Even the angels above cannot be said to agree in a perfect intellectual unity. They are ever studying, learning, mutually imparting, and mutually acquiring. They are of necessity therefore, changing their conclusions, and their views of truth, the partial for general, and the superficial for deeper, at every step. If this were not so, learning and study would be idle, and without an object. It cannot be said of any inferior minds, unless we suppose them to be perfectly equal in their powers, and in the progress of their attainments, that they can thus perfectly agree. While anything re-

mains to be learned, new conclusions, perhaps very different conclusions, are still to be formed and to be expressed. An omniscient mind alone can understand all truth. "The unity required in the Church," says Bishop Stillingfleet, "is not an unity of judgment and apprehension among the members of it, which though it be their duty to endeavor after, yet it is no further attainable by man's endeavors, than Adamic perfection is. And unio Christianorum in this sense, is one of the jewels belonging to the crown of heaven."

This intellectual equality, without which there can be no intellectual uniformity, would not be desirable, even if it were possible. Its necessary result would be a tame and uninteresting identity of minds, constituting the whole race in fact, but a single individual. It would destroy the chief beauty of the intelligent world; breaking up that whole variety of construction and display, which in minds as in matter, forms a yet more glorious harmony, from the very diversity in which its individuals shine. It would close that opened heavenly way which now directs

"Our knowledge, and the scale of nature sets.
From centre to circumference, whereon
In contemplation of created things
By steps we may ascend to God."

As it annihilated the beauty, so would it overturn much of the mutual benevolence of intelligent beings. It would constitute an entire independence of minds upon each other; making all to know as much as any; calling into being an indifference to others, and a selfish satisfaction and complacency, for which no uniformity of sentiment, or agreement in opinion could ever be considered an adequate compensation. Vainly, therefore, do men strive for, and insist upon, this perfect similarity of opinion and judgment, as the intended unity of the Christian Church. Had this been the point divinely proposed and appointed, the Bible would have been a simple catena of articles, like the Ancient Creeds; articles to be imposed upon all, and to be received by all; articles without which there could be no salvation; less than which would have been infidelity, more than which additions of man's device. God be praised, his blessed Bible is no iron mask like this. It is full of divine instruction, with which the diligent soul shall be made fat. But its blessings are to descend only upon those who read, and study and meditate; who are not only learning, but also coming to the knowledge of the truth. And the discovered width and depth of the stream of light and knowledge, is regulated by the distance we travel along its heavenly banks, and the zeal with which we attempt to ford it; presenting unceasing encouragement to those who labor to understand, and to stand perfect in all the will of God.

This religious unity is as evidently, not a mere external, apparent unity of profession and name, a oneness of temporary discipline, and outward type. Such an unity as this, an universal form,

without a co-ordinate entire intellectual unity delighting to express itself through this form, would be an intolerable burden. Outward union of form is the creature of mere earthly power and arrangement, and it must perish and pass away with the earth from which it springs. It may be valued as an expression of truth, for the inferior purposes to which it may be made subservient, and which it is able to promote. But it cannot justly be considered as anything beyond an incident, however occasionally of increased importance, in the spiritual and abiding system of Gospel truth. The very condition of man upon earth renders the actual perfection of such an outward union in discipline and appearance, excluding all variety, utterly impossible. The changes in human general tions and circumstances, as man passes on through successive steps in the history and destiny of his race, must continually tend to To say that these necessary changes only break up certain less important parts of this discipline, but leave its fundamental substratum of authority and requisition still entire, is an assertion wholly arbitrary, and a weak begging of the whole ques-If God has appointed an entire oneness in the circumstances of outward religious discipline, as man's absolute duty under the Gospel, as he did under the Law, it is not for man to speculate upon the comparative importance of its various impositions. The bell and the pomegranate are of as much importance, and clothed with as much authority in such a system, as the Temple and the veil. The Jewish system of religion was necessarily local. And any Judaizing of the Gospel, to cramp it up in an unvielding outward shape of ministration and observance, of equal necessity localizes and limits it. No mere outward imposition, unless it be of the simplest character, can be unvaryingly preached to every creature. Had this external uniformity been the Lord's plan of oneness for his people under the Gospel, he must have laid down exactly, the outward system, to which it might be possible to conform all the generations and nations of men to whom his Gospel was to be proclaimed. wherever such an arrangment of ordinances had been established and proclaimed by him, the very omission of every point beyond it, becomes the strongest declaration that in this relation, such points were merely incidents and not essentials. This our God and Saviour has done, in setting up a living ministry of men to preach his word, and two outward rites as marks and professions of those Beyond this, men may go in the expediency of who embrace it. circumstances, not in the authority of absolute imposition. attempt to carry out such an outward system in every possible application, and make a mere uniformity of circumstances and outward condition, the desired oneness of the Church of God, has been Satan's imitation of the spiritual kingdom of the Lord, and the spiritual communion over which he reigns, in that perfection of his craft for man's destruction, the system of Anti-Christian Rome. All such impositions, set forth and received as the required unity APR

of the church, must be the result of constraint on the one side, and of indifference or weakness on the other; the usurpings of ambitious authority, and the yielding of the spirit of feebleness in submission to it. It is a worthless impounding of the divergent spirits of men. under the mere key of terrifying force, instead of the transformation of them by the inwardly renewing and subduing influence of spiritual and unchanging truth. It is a shell to cover, merely, and not a substance to abide. In such a system Satan accomplishes the destruction of men in two entirely separate ways, by the power of superstition within, and by the power of infidelity without. If you allow external toleration in religious concerns, you have necessarily external variety, the natural result of freedom. If you refuse it, you make the alternative of submission, infidelity—the inevitable product of constraint. Rome refuses toleration, and in doing it. has all the responsibility of propagating infidels. It says to surrounding men who look upon its system, "You shall be this or nothing. for no other system shall be allowed." And men reply, "Then we will be nothing," and they abide by their choice. And whether they are brought in, or excluded, Satan's plan in their destruction is equally secured. External minute uniformity is not the Lord's

plan of oneness for his people.

The unity of the Gospel, the unity which it gives to man, and enjoins upon man, and by which the Church of God is known in opposition to all the divisions of men, is a spiritual unity; which though consistent with much outward diversity, is real, operative and permanent. "Ye are all one in Christ Jesus." It is the fruit of the Holy Spirit in the hearts in which he dwells and rules: the result of which is an everlasting and unchangeable oneness of such souls thus renewed, in their relations to God, and to each other. It is an unity of motive, by which every true Christian, every real member of the body of Christ, is led to desire only and above all things the promotion of the divine glory. It is an unity of desire, by which each one seeks to attain the one mind, and character, and presence of a beloved Lord. It is an unity of purpose and plan, by which every possessor of it is prompted to obey, and honor, and imitate, one Divine Master and Guide of all renewed souls. It is an unity of spiritual experience, in which each one has been enlightened and quickened by the same Divine Spirit; made to feel the same burden of guilt; to be conscious of the same personal deficiencies; to seek the same provisions of divine mercy; to accept the same complete salvation in Christ; to find pardon in the same fountain of love; to depend on the same inward spiritual power, divinely bestowed; to ask for the same gifts of grace; to rest upon the same Almighty victorious arm; to hope for the same eternal glory; to confide in the same perfect obedience; and to fasten all their hopes and joys upon the same infinite sufficiency of one Glorious Reigning Lord. It is a unity of relation, which has joined together vast multitudes who have no outward knowledge of each other, in one eternal and indissoluble bond, an unity which in this view expresses itself habitually in prayer, in sympathy, in love, in spiritual aid, and which in this operation, is made the grand instrument of the Holy Ghost in enlarging this heavenly companionship, and of gathering lost and perishing souls into the shelter which is thus displayed. It is an unity of affection and feeling, which the Apostle calls the most perfect bond which can subsist among men. "Put on charity, which is the bond of perfection!" far higher, more real, more operative, more lasting, more divine, than all the possible bonds of intellectual agreement, or accordance

in outward discipline.

Here is unity,-real, actual oneness. A oneness which brings vast multitudes who had no common relations but the needs, and guilt, and feebleness of a common humanity, into one spiritual connection from which they go no more out. Here is "one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and in all, one body, one spirit, one hope of one divine calling." can there be greater unity among independent, intelligent beings? In what do they differ, which is not temporary and comparatively unimportant? In what do they agree, which can ever fade or Surely the boasted unity in discipline of Papal Rome is nothing in comparison of this. That is the oneness of bodies which are alike, because all are dead, and motionless, and without self-This is the union of living agents who are one, because all perfectly agree in the same great and choral harmony of love. and activity, and praise. That is the organized working of a machine, in which every automaton figure obeys the will of him who directs the motion of the whole. This is the combined energy of responsible beings, who, moved by the same spirit, accord in voluntary united operation, to produce the same great and desired re-That is the valley of Ezekiel, when its bones were scattered and were alike, because all were bleached and dry. This is the same valley where the army stood forth clothed in the activity, and endowed with the powers of a new life, and the one Spirit of God breathed from every quarter, upon the standing host, and they lived and moved, and acted, and went forth to victory, under his single heavenly guidance. This is unity, entire, actual, operative unity. But it is perfectly consistent with great outward diversity of nation, and language, and form of worship; with much and wide differences of judgment upon many unessential points of mere intellectual perception; with very differing conceptions of truth progressively understood, and as yet, but very partially discerned by any.

This blessed oneness of heart and feeling must govern in the domestic circle. Wretched is the house which has it not. Where the spirit of the Lord is, there is peace and order, as well as liberty. It must rule in the individual congregation of professing Christians, uniting in the same house of prayer, for worship and mutual edification. It must there oppose and correct all the divisions which

jealousy and earthly pride, or selfish interest may tend to produce. Here men are to be all of one mind, to love as brethren, to be pitiful and courteous, to be of the same mind one toward another, according to Christ Jesus. In the whole Church of God it must be the governing principle, extending its influence, and embrace not merely within the limits of one particular outward communion, but to the whole company of God's people,—to all who love our Lord

Jesus Christ in sincerity.

It is an union, however, with the people of God alone,—with real manifest believers in the Lord Jesus,—with the true servants of the Most High, which seeks them for its objects here, because they are to be its eternal objects hereafter; and which renounces for them, the society and fellowship of the unbelieving, superstitious and profane. Whoever is to dwell with us forever in the Saviour's glory, must be united with us, in our exercise of sympathy and love upon the earth. And though we may differ, and must differ, in judgment and perception, and conclusions here,—yet there need be no divisions, envyings, or strife. Whereto we have already attained. we are to walk by the same rule, we are to mind the same thing. Our union is not to be with the ungodly, or profane; or with this evil world, whose friendship is enmity with God; but with the people of the living God. Union with them for efforts to advance his glory, and to establish his truth, we have no right to withhold or to refuse. We are bound to edify them,—we have no authority To withhold our fellowship and co-operation in to destroy them. the Saviour's work for those whom we really believe to be his servants, in the extent to which we are able to impart it, must always

This is an unity whose duration will be eternal. The bond by which the renewed people of God are bound together on earth is the bond which unites them all to Christ. It is an imperishable bond. It is the work of a spirit of almighty and undying power. It is the operation of a plan of grace which was formed in an eternity past, and which will abide in an eternity to come. The principles upon which it is formed, and by which it is governed, are the inseparable elements of a purified, intelligent mind. And when all the bonds of earthly circumstances, the outward conformations of ministries and ordinances have passed forever away, the whole company of God's elect, the real church and body of Christ, shall stand up together in an imperishable fellowship, known by one name, animated by one spirit, combined together in one glorious employment for eternity. The chaff of material organizations, whose protection was needful for a season, shall have been swept from the floor; and the wheat of abiding principle, of sympathy, and peace, and love, and truth, shall be gathered into the garner, and remain forever.

II. In opposition to this enjoined and required unity of the

Christian body, the Apostle solemnly declares, that divisions, envyings, and strife are carnal. He does not mean mere differences of opinion, of judgment, even upon important points of doctrine,differences which were found and tolerated, not only among the apostolic churches, but among the apostles themselves. They received different measures of divine light, and their conclusions and views of duty varied accordingly. And the Holy Spirit has thought fit to record this important fact, and to show how, in the case of Peter, (compare his Epistles with the Epistle to the Galatians,) even in an inspired man, increasing experience brought out a clearer and better understanding of the Gospel in the closing years of life. That the whole Church of Christ should be of one judgment and habit, in external conformity, can never be expected, nor is it in all respects to be desired. The divisions against which the apostle warns, are such as spring from envy and result in strife. They are carnal,—carnal in their origin. It is not truth, nor the love of truth, which promotes them, but often extreme hostility to truth, and to the spirit which real truth imparts. They are carnal in their influence. Nothing more certainly disturbs and destroys the spiritual mind. They break up all peace and joy within the soul. They destroy all the holiness and power of the Church without. They are carnal in their effects. They separate real brethren from each other; and often divide into unnecessary and lasting hostility, those who are partakers of common privileges and blessings. They are the walk and the course of men, merely selfish in their purposes and operations, eager for personal aggrandizement, careless of mutual injury. Sad indeed is it that such a course should ever be introduced into the Church of Christ. But blessed be God, they are carnal in their duration also. They belong to the earth, and they will perish with the earth from which they spring. servants of the Lord will soon outlive them, and pass beyond the field of their operation and influence. The hour will come, when they shall be mere men no longer,-but equal unto the angels, as the children of the resurrection, they shall have the one mind which was in Christ Jesus the Lord.

Let such a system have no dominion among us. Let us strive to walk not as men, but as the servants of the living God. Let us avoid these contentions among Christians and those who originate them. Let us look less at the facts in religion which are temporary and fading, and more at those which are permanent and unchangeable,—less at mere outward characteristics, and more at the real and spiritual marks of the Church of God:—less at the deficiencies of others, and more at the needs and dangers of our own souls. We are in no danger of loving the true servants of God too much, or of uniting too much with those who are really united to Christ. Let it be our purpose and effort to pray for, and to communicate peace and mercy upon all who walk according to this rule, as the

Israel of God.

## "FOR WHAT IS YOUR LIFE?"

Thus life, in its history and results, is a fearful reality; yet how prone are we all to spend it as if it were a dream of the night! Probationary life is given as a means to an end—an end, too, of infinite moment to us all; and yet most men live this life away as if there were nothing more desirable than it, and nothing to follow it. Rational being, especially in this gospel-world, is invested with amazing interest and responsibility, yet how many sleep or trifle

it away as if it were a stupid or idle scene.

How few upon whom now rests the fearful responsibilities of life, and who are hastening to meet its eternal issues, in heaven or hell, have duly pondered those suggestive words—"What is your life?" or are walking wisely and peacefully in the light which they shed on the question of duty and of destiny? Few men, we fear, take a sober, rational, prayerful view of this present life—in its brevity—in the uncertainty of its continuance—in its true and proper end—in its relations and duties, obligations and responsibilities—in its connection with death and judgment and retribution—in the certain and eternal fruits and results of it in the future. Right views on this affecting and momentous subject—a subject in which every man has so great an interest at stake—would more powerfully affect the heart and influence the life.

Is this life "a vapor which appeareth for a little time and then vanisheth away"—a "shadow flitting o'er the plain"—"as a dream when one awaketh?" Then how can we reckon on its continuance as we do? How waste on trifles its precious moments, each of which may be the last, and one of which not even Queen Elizabeth's kingdom could buy? How defer to an uncertain future the para-

mount claims of God and the salvation of the soul?

"Counting on long years of pleasure here, Though quite unfurnished for the world to come."

Is the salvation of the soul from sin and its fitness for heaven the real and chief end of life? Is this the main end we are to live for? To this single, yet sublime purpose are all things else to yield? Are all earthly questions and interests to be viewed and acted upon only as they stand related to salvation? Is this present world to be

overcome, and heaven sought in preference? Is self to be crucified, and Christ exalted? Is this body of sin and death to be brought under, and the soul disciplined and trained for glory immortal? Is the present to take its impression, character, direction, not from the past, but from the future—not from man around us? life, one of intimate and responsible relations-imposed by life's great Author, binding us to his law, his gospel, his providence, his creatures in all worlds, and to our fellow-men in particular, and obligating us to seek the glory of the one and the happiness of the other? Then how can we live for finite or selfish ends? How forget God, our Maker, Preserver, Redeemer, Judge, a single moment! How neglect to care for the souls and bodies of those whom he has made our brethren! Oh! are we acting each day—each moment under the pressure of these immense relations, made responsible throughout their almost infinite circuit for the present and future consequence of each act of life? Then how carefully, how benevolently, how wisely does it become us to live, as the centre of such a sphere of moral and accountable being, and the source of such untold influences!

Is life but the prelude to death—the seed-time of immortality—eternity in embryo—the judgment-day foreshadowed? Then what folly to crowd death out of the mind! What madness to have no regard to our "latter end!" What infatuation to sow broad-cast the seeds of every error and vice, and evil habit, and leave them to grow and come to maturity! What monstrous impiety and wickedness to live regardless of God's authority, and without any reference to the day of reckoning and of doom. If life has such immediate relations to death, judgment, and eternity, then surely, these most tremendous realities should fling their warning light forward upon our pathway. We should live as if we were acting our own death-scene, which in reality we are doing. We should live, as if the flaming eye of our divine Judge were now turned full upon us, scanning all our thoughts and actions. We should live as if the thunders of eternal retribution were already rolling over our heads.

Ah! we are all answering, as fast as time will let us, the great question—" What is your life?" We are working out the momentous problem each for himself; and soon shall we see and know the result, and be constrained to abide by it. We are writing down our moral history in characters enduring as eternity,—line after line—chapter after chapter; soon the finale will come—the work

will be done—and we shall meet its testimony hereafter.

There is no place like a death-bed to answer for us the inquiry, "What is your life?" Then, if not before, will the folly or wisdom of life's choice—life's pursuit—life's moral character in reference to God and sin, salvation, heaven and hell—be clearly manifest. The disclosures of that hour!—what remorse and fear and agony have they caused to multitudes whose lives were passed in

folly and sin! To have then a good hope, and to feel that life is but the dawn of heaven—the infant state of perfect holiness in glory—the stepping-stone, through grace, to the heights of the redeemed above—will be joyful indeed. Let us lay the foundation of such a hope in a life of piety and holiness.

"We know that we must die; oh, then, how strange
That he whose life is but a passing day,
Should live regardless of his last great change!
All earthly brightness soon must fade away;
All earthly things are hasting to decay;
And man possessed of an immortal soul,
Lives to exalt his perishing mortal clay,
Nor listens to the never-ceasing toll
Of hours he may regret, while ceaseless ages roll."

N. Y. Ev.

## IX.

# CHRIST, THE FOUNDATION.

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"Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste."—Isniah xxviii. 16.

ONE of the most frequent and significant figures employed by the Holy Spirit to designate "the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood," is that of a stately and well-compacted Thus the apostle Paul addressing the Ephesian believers. as a portion of this redeemed church, tells them they "are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone. In whom (or upon whom) all the building fitly framed together groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord." (Eph. ii. 20, 21.) Of this building, it is the doctrine both of the Old Testament and the New, that the promised Messiah of the one, and the anointed Jesus of the other, is the sole and the secure foundation. We have the unerring authority of inspiration itself, as uttered in the language both of Paul and of Peter, for applying the prediction of our text to the Lord Jesus Christ. "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus," says the apostle Paul, "and shalt believe in thine heart, that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For, the Scripture saith. "Whosoever believeth on him, shall not be ashamed." (Rom. x. 9, 11.) Still more full and complete is the attestation of Peter to "If so be that ye the Messianic application of this prophecy. have tasted that THE LORD is gracious: to whom coming as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God and precious; ye also as lively stones are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God, by Jesus Christ. Wherefore it is contained in the Scripture, Behold I lay in Zion, a chief corner-stone, elect, precious, and he that believeth on HIM shall not be confounded." (1 Peter ii. 3-6.) Guided, therefore, by these inspired commentators on the words of our text, we cannot err in the application of this glorious prediction to our adorable Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Let us proceed, therefore, to contemplateI. THE FIGURATIVE DESCRIPTION WHICH IS HERE GIVEN OF CHRIST, AS THE FOUNDATION OF THE SPIRITUAL BUILDING, THE CHURCH.

II. THE PROMISE WHICH IS MADE TO THOSE WHO BELIEVE, AND THUS BUILD UPON THIS FOUNDATION.

I. Yes, believer, it is to thy Saviour and thy Redeemer; it is to him on whom all thy confidence reposes, and all thy hopes are built, that this precious description applies—" Behold I lay in Zion for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation!" Were it possible that a doubt of this delightful truth might still remain, the words of Paul would at once remove it. "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." (1 Cor. iii. 11.) Christ, the foundation of his Church! how significant and how expressive the figure! and vet how perfectly simple and level, even to the comprehension of a child! A foundation is the base or groundwork of a building; it is that upon which the whole edifice rests, and which thus supports all the other parts of the building. Take away the foundation of the material edifice in which we are now assembled, and even a child can understand that the whole building must fall; and thus is it that the Church is built upon Christ, and the only reason why it has not, and cannot fall before the attacks of men and of devils is that it is founded upon a rock,-"the rock of ages," and that rock Take away from the Christian system, the Lord Jesus Christ, in all the glory of his essential Godhead, and in all the fulness of his vicarious atonement and obedience unto death, and the whole fabric must fall—even as a building, when the foundation is removed from under it-a mass of undistinguishable ruin. The precious blood of Christ which was shed upon Calvary constitutes that "fountain for sin and uncleanness," in which every member of his true spiritual church is cleansed from the guilt of sin. There is not a saint in glory, who has not "washed his robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb," and there never can The meritorious obedience and sufferings of Jesus Christ, are the grounds of all acceptance with God, the Father, the foundation upon which every individual believer builds all his hopes; and as the spiritual church of Christ is made up of believers and only believers in every nation and in every age, it follows that the foundation upon which that church rests collectively, is the Lord Jesus Christ, even "he who liveth and was dead, and is alive for evermore."

The church which Christ purchased with his own blood consists of true believers of every land, of every age, and of every name. This spiritual church, thus founded upon himself, is bounded by the narrow limits of no visible organization. God forbid, therefore, that we should imitate those who proudly arrogate to themselves, as a visible hierarchy or organized community, the claim of being exclusively the church of Christ! The New Testament knows nothing

of any such organization as exclusively the Church. It cannot be doubted that from the time of the apostles till now, there have ever existed true churches of Christ; yet neither any one of these visible churches, however pure its doctrine, -- nor any collection of these true churches, much less of false ones, had any right to arrogate to themselves, as an ecclesiastical organization, the character of the alone church of Christ. We read nowhere in the New Testament of "the church," in the sense of the visible churches, of a nation, or of the world, united under patriarch, primate or pope. True, we read of "the church of God," but it is that "which he hath purchased with his own blood," including all the elect of God, who are now in heaven, or who ever will be there, the purchase of a Saviour's blood, with whatever visible church they may have been associated upon earth, or even if connected with none. church is Christ's mystical body, of which he is the "head," (Col. i. 18, 24,) and, therefore, includes all such, and only such as are his living and spiritual members. This is "the church of the first-born. which are written in heaven," (Heb. xii. 23,) and includes all those and only those, who are written in the Lamb's book of life. (Rev. xxi. 27.) Of this church it is said, "Christ is the head of the church, and he is the Saviour of the body," and "Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word. That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle. or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish." (Eph. v. 23-27.) But all this can be said of no ecclesiastical or-Where is the visible church of which it ganization on earth. can be affirmed with certainty, that all its members are living and spiritual members of Christ? and that in its records not a single name is enrolled that is not "written in the Lamb's book of life?" This "glorious church" is not the Romish, nor the Greek, nor the Anglican church. It is neither Episcopal, nor Presbyterian, neither Methodist, nor Baptist; although it probably includes members of them all. It is no mere national church, bounded by state or geographical limits, but it consists of "a great multitude whom no man can number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues." (Rev. vii. 9.) Nay, more than this, though all its members will, at last, together stand "before the throne and before the Lamb," yet this . church is at present confined neither to earth nor to heaven. "Part of the host have crossed the flood, and part are crossing now." Thus separated but not divided, the members of this church are both on earth and in heaven.

> "The saints on earth and all the dead But one communion make; All join in Christ, their living head, And of his grace partake."

In this sense, but in this only do the Scriptures recognize, and do

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we believe, in a universal or catholic church. And whether we speak of the spiritual church in this general signification, or of the visible churches of Christ upon earth, either individually or collectively, it is true that as the foundation of the church, "God hath laid in Zion a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone," and that "other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

But it is time that we proceed to consider the epithets that are figuratively applied to Christ in our text, as the foundation which God hath laid in Zion.

"Behold I lay in Zion for a foundation, a stone," or a rock. The general idea included in this figure is undoubtedly that of stability, firmness, or strength. If Christ is indeed that rock upon which the church is built, then is it established upon a foundation strong, immovable, secure—and then may we with confidence believe, that even "the gates of hell shall never prevail against it."

There are some, however, who maintain that, not the Lord Jesus Christ, but the fallible mortal Peter is that "rock" upon which the church of Christ is built; and this belief they profess to derive from the conversation between our blessed Lord and Peter. recorded by Matthew, (chap. xvi. 15, etc.) Jesus said to his disciples, "Whom say ye that I am? and Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." The interpretations which Roman Catholic writers put upon this passage, viz., that Peter is the rock or foundation upon which the church is built, evidently conflicts with the declaration of the apostle Paul, already quoted, "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid—which is Jesus Christ;" this interpretation also is comparatively modern in its origin, and is adopted in flagrant violation of the creed of the Romish church itself. In that creed, called the creed of pope Pius IV., they solemnly profess to receive no interpretations of Scripture, "except according to the unanimous consent of the fathers," (nisi juxta unanimem consensum patrum.) Among the most eminent of the "fathers" here referred to, I will quote from only two, in order to prove my assertion, that, in their interpretations of Christ's words to Peter, they violate their own acknowledged principles. In a sermon of Augustine, the celebrated bishop of Hippo, that most eminent of all the fathers comments upon the words as follows: "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock which thou hast confessed—that is, upon myself, the Son of the living God, I will build my church." The opinion of Hilary, another of the most celebrated fathers, differs slightly from that of Augustine, and most entirely from that of the modern Romanists. "This one foundation," says Hilary, "is immovable, that is, that one blessed rock of faith, confessed by the mouth of Peter, 'thou art the Son of the living God,'" and again "the building of the church is upon this

rock of confession."

I do not quote from these early fathers, because I imagine that their authority upon this or any other subject should settle the question-their opinions are to be judged, in precisely the same way as those of other fallible men,—but merely to show that, in this instance at least, Romanists have violated their own rule, to receive no interpretations except according to the unanimous consent of the fathers."—It is evident, moreover, whatever may be the degree of weight attached to these writers, that if the promise referred to Peter, it failed of accomplishment; for when Peter, with oaths and curses, denied his Lord, certainly the gates of hell did prevail against him; and if the church had rested upon him, when he fell, the church would have fallen with him. Still more evidently is this true of the long line of corrupt and vicious men, so different in life and spirit from the apostle Peter, who for ten or twelve centuries at least, have claimed to be successors of the apostle, and vicegerents of God upon earth. No, no, brethren! Christ-and not a fallible, erring mortal-is the rock, the tried, the sure foundation; and "their rock is not as our rock, our enemies themselves being judges."

This foundation is, moreover, designated a tried stone. "Behold I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a *tried stone*." Let us examine the application of this epithet to our Lord Jesus Christ.

1. Yes, my brethren, Christ is a tried stone! For in the first place, I remark, he was tried, when enduring the attacks of the serpent in his conflict on behalf of his people on earth. sooner had Satan succeeded in introducing sin, and consequent misery into our world, than the bow of promise appeared in the cloud, and God declared to the serpent, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it (that is, the promised seed), shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." For four thousand years had Satan been in awful expectancy of this formidable adversary, and been preparing himself for the conflict. At length the promised conqueror appears in our world; and it is a fine conception of our great English poet, Milton, that on the day of Christ's public baptism, when he was solemnly anointed to his work, Satan "with envy fraught and rage" hovered near the sacred scene, listened to the attestation from Heaven, "this is my beloved Son," then flew to the regions of darkness, to bear the alarming news to his compeers and associates in rebellion.

"And them amidst,
With looks aghast and sad, he thus bespake;—
Alas! too soon for us, the circling hours
This dreaded time have compassed, wherein we
Must bide the stroke of that long threatened wound

To be inflicted by the seed of Eve Upon my head. \* \* \* \* \* \* For this ill news I bring; the woman's seed, Destined to this, is late of woman born."

And now the arch adversary nerves himself for the conflict, in which he knows he must engage. He had already sought, in vain. to destroy the wondrous babe at Bethlehem by inciting his willing servant Herod, to a deed of terrible cruelty and blood. Again he attempts to overcome this wondrous being, by the temptation in the wilderness, but Jesus comes forth victorious from the trial, and the enemy is again defeated. Ah, how vain the attempts of Satan to put out this glorious light which had come into the world, and to parry the dreadful blow which he knew must ere long fall upon his own head! Yet, although he may not destroy, he still may bruise, for so it had been promised, even to him, "and thou shalt bruise He cannot touch the head, the kingdom of Christ. though his own head must be crushed, his own kingdom be destroyed;-yet he may bruise the heel, the inferior part, the human nature of Christ, and he prepares to do his worst. Let us then, in imagination, follow our blessed Lord and Saviour to his cross of agony, and there contemplate the desperate conflict between the serpent and the seed. Christ had already contended with the cruel adversary in the garden of Gethsemane, in bitter agony (ayor, a contention, contest for victory) and bloody strife—but he had stood the trial, and had come off victorious. At length the enemy beholds the suffering Son of God, hanging in unutterable anguish upon the torturing cross. Hark, that cry! "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Satan hears it, and perhaps for a moment, imagines that he has won the victory. the Father, hath forsaken him," thinks the great adversary. But is it so then? Hath Jesus been tried in this furnace, and hath he failed to stand the trial? No, no! for, hark, another cry! and now all nature attests that it is the shout of victory. "It is finished!" the glorious triumph is achieved, the glorious work is done. At this cry, the whole fabric of nature trembles to its centre. The vail of the temple is rent in twain. The solid rocks are shattered and The earth is shaken to its deep foundation; and not earth only, but also Hell. Satan heard it, and trembled, and tottered beneath the blow, and all the domains of darkness resounded with that shout of victory, while all the fallen inhabitants of that dark abyss, heard it as the sentence which pronounced their doom. Yes, my brethren then was the promise fulfilled, "the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head." Then was the kingdom of darkness shaken from centre to circumference. Then, the domains of death were invaded, and "the graves were opened, and many bodies of saints which slept arose." Then, the dart of death was blunted and deprived forever of its sting. Blunted! did I say? Nay, more than that. In the words of John Ryland, "Then the dart of death went through the suffering Saviour, and stuck in his cross, and the king of terrors has never been able to draw it thence, to bring it to the death-bed of a believer, ever since." Yes, my brethren, truly our Jesus is a tried stone! Tried in this bitter conflict, and he stood the trial; he came off triumphantly victorious. And O, what a victory! and what a moment that, in which this victory was achieved! The wily adversarylike some serpent trailing his slimy way through the tangled grasshad tracked the path of the Son of God, through all his scenes of sorrow and of suffering, up to the moment when on the cross he uttered his mournful, bitter cry. At that instant, the serpent with his most venomous grip seized upon the heel of the seed of Then Jesus appeared forsaken both of God and man. Satan is just ready to utter the shout of triumph. But, at that moment, Jesus lifts up that wounded heel, stamps upon and crushes the head of the serpent, and cries, It is finished! the glorious victory's won! Yes, my brethren, Jesus is a tried stone!

2. But in another sense, Jesus is a tried stone—tried, because amid all the attacks of persecution and infidelity, his church, founded upon himself, has not only withstood the shock, but has flourished and increased amid the fury of the storm. Founded upon a rock,

the gates of hell have not prevailed against it.

Near the south-western extremity of the island of Great Britain, the traveller may observe a tall and massive column of solid masonry, founded upon an isolated rock at the distance of miles from the shore, rearing its lofty beacon light to warn the mariner of the dangers that lurk beneath, and of the rocky caves where the hardy crew of many a noble vessel have found their ocean graves. That structure is the world-renowned Eddystone light-house. When the architect of that noble column proposed, near a hundred years ago, to erect on that storm-lashed rock a light-house of solid masonry, which might defy the fury of the most terrible tempest, there were those who laughed to scorn the enterprise, and treated it as the dream of a visionary and enthusiast, while the prediction of nearly all was, that such a structure could never stand before the dreadful storms which had dashed many a noble vessel upon the Eddystone rocks. Yet undeterred by the scoffs of enemies, or by the fears of friends, the builder proceeded in his work, and as layer after layer of masonry was added, the predictions of many were loud and frequent, that the first violent storm would sweep it all into the deep. Storm after storm beat upon the yet unfinished structure, driving the workmen from their labor; but as each storm subsided, the work was still uninjured. At length, in about three years, the last top-stone was laid upon the noble column, and in one week afterwards, the saving beacon-light was streaming over the waves from its lofty summit. Still, many predicted its downfall.- 'Wait,' said they, 'till a storm rises, such as occurs only three or four times in a century-like the great tempest of

1703-and see whether our fears will not be verified.' years after the completion of the work, about the beginning of the year 1762, just such another terrible and furious storm arose, and the people on shore trembled for the fate of the keepers of the light-house, and expected that the morning light would show that the whole structure had been scattered to the waves. fury of the storm was past, many anxious eyes were directed through telescopes towards the Eddystone rocks, and the expectation was general that no vestiges of the light-house would be seen. How great, then, was the gratitude of its friends, and the astonishment of all, when through the still dark and murky air, the noble column was seen next morning, still rearing its summit to the clouds, perfectly uninjured, and with not a stone displaced! Then, at length, all were forced to confess, that the building was secure. It was a tried light-house, and the rock upon which it was founded was proved to be a "tried stone, a sure foundation." Since that time, this monument of Smeaton's genius and perseverance has stood for near a century, and storm after storm has spent its rage upon it, but still it remains uninjured, holding forth amid the darkness its friendly light to warn the mariner of his dangers, and to direct him in safety to his port. It is founded upon a rock, and the storms and the dangers of a century have proved that rock to be "a tried stone, a sure foundation."

And thus, my brethren, has storm after storm of persecution and hate fallen upon the saints of the Lord Jesus, the church which he purchased with his blood—persecution from Pagan, from Papist, and from Infidel, through her long career of eighteen centuries, yet that church still stands secure and unshaken—with energies unbroken, and numbers largely swelling from century to century—because it is founded upon a rock, and that rock is Christ.

"On the Rock of ages founded,
What can shake thy sure repose?
With Salvation's walls surrounded,
Thou may'st smile at all thy foes."

If the foundation upon which the church is built had been less than solid rock, the fierce storms of persecution and hatred, which from age to age have been beating upon it, would long since have laid it prostrate in ruins; but instead of that, they have but demonstrated its strength and added to its dimensions. So true is this, that it has grown into a proverb, "the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church." And from that blood—whether poured out in the amphitheatres of pagan Rome, the inquisitorial dungeons of papal Rome, or at the auto-da-fés of Seville, of Smithfield, or of Oxford—have sprung up harvests, multiplying a hundred-fold converts to the church on earth, to fill up the places of those, sent by the fires and flames of martyrdom to swell the ranks of the church in Heaven.

Yes, my brethren! in the security and growth of the church, in

spite of winds that have blown, and storms that have beat upon it, do we see abundant proof that it is founded upon a rock, and that

that rock is "a tried stone, a sure foundation!"

3. In still another sense is it true, that Christ is a tried stone: for thousands and millions who are now in heaven, have tested the stability of that sure foundation, by building all their hopes thereon, and not one of them all has ever been disappointed. O. if we could draw aside the veil that separates us from the multitudes of the redeemed in glory, and inquire of them—what was the foundation upon which they built, the rock on which they trusted, "while travelling in the vale of tears below"—they would reply with one voice-"None but Jesus! none but Jesus! He, alone, was the foundation laid in Zion; on that foundation all our hopes were based. and we found him to be "a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation." "Do you behold us," exclaim these glorified ones, "arrayed in white robes? Those robes were washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb. Do you behold us bearing the palms of triumph, and singing the songs of victory? We overcame through the blood of the Lamb." And then they strike their lofty notes-"Worthy, worthy is the Lamb that was slain! Blessing, honor, glory and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the

Throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever!"

Such, my brethren, would be the testimony of all the hosts of the redeemed. Not a saint in glory that did not build upon Christ as the rock of his hopes, and every one found him to be "a tried stone, a sure foundation." They found him thus in the hour of temptation and trial, in the hour of sorrow and adversity, and in the hour of danger and of death. Paul was standing-firmly standing—on this foundation, when, with death staring him in the face, he said, "I know in whom I have believed;" and thousands of dying saints on the brink of Jordan have reposed on him with equal confidence. The question was once asked of a dving man of God, the late venerable Dr. Gano-" Do you still hold to the doctrines you have preached, the doctrines of the Deity and the atonement of Christ?" and what was his reply?--"O," said he-"do you ask me, if I still hold to these doctrines? it is these precious truths hold me now, and if they did not, I should sink!" Yes, my brethren, Jesus is indeed a tried stone. This departing saint of God, and thousands, millions more, built all their hopes on him, and they found him, when they most needed a solid rock to rest upon, to be "a tried stone, a sure foundation." And let me ask, beloved, have not we, too, tested the stability of this rock of all our hopes? Yes, blessed be God! we also have built upon Christ as the foundation; and amid trials, adversity, and sorrow, we have ever found him to be "a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation." Well, therefore, can we sympathize with the conclusion which the Apostle Peter draws, when quoting this glorious description of Christ the foundation—"Unto you, therefore, which believe, he is PRECIOUS."

We have already dwelt more at length upon this significant and beautiful description of Christ the foundation, than we intended when commencing this discourse. It is time, therefore, that we now proceed briefly to consider

II. THE PROMISE WHICH IS MADE TO THOSE WHO BELIEVE, AND THUS BUILD UPON THIS FOUNDATION.

To the man who builds upon Christ as the sure foundation, or in other words, who exercises faith in the promised Messiah as the ground of all his hopes, who relies for salvation on his atoning blood and perfect righteousness, it is promised in our text-"he that believeth shall not make haste." The apostles Paul and Peter. in citing this passage, quote from the Septuagint, and accordingly they render it "he that believeth shall not be ashamed," (Rom. ix. 33,) or "confounded," (1 Pet. ii. 6.) The Hebrew word properly signifies "to make haste," and hence, according to one lexicographer, "to hurry hither and thither as persons in confusion." The apparent discrepancy between the text as given by Isaiah, in the Old Testament, and as quoted by the apostles in the New, vanishes at once when we consider the nature of the figure that is here employed. The exact idea of the word in this place seems to be that of a man on whose house the tempest is beating, and who, fearing the foundation is insecure, makes haste to escape therefrom to a place of safety. To illustrate the force of the promise, conceive the situation of a man as described by our blessed Lord in his sermon on the mount, who had "built his house upon the sand." The rains descend, the floods beat upon that house, the foundations begin to give way, the house totters to its fall, and the frightened inmate, terrified and bewildered, "makes haste" to escape from the crumbling ruins, and to fly to a place of safety. Another has built his house upon the rock. Upon this also the rains descend and the floods beat, but its firm foundations remain unmoved, because it is founded upon a rock, and its happy inmate, so far from being obliged to "make haste" to escape-in conscious security, may smile at the fury of the storm. "He that believeth shall not make haste"-"shall not be confounded"-shall not be "ashamed" of his The man who believes on the Lord Jesus Christ builds on him as the rock of his salvation, the tried and sure foundation; and when the gathering storms of divine wrath shall burst over a guilty world, then the promise of our text declares, that such an one shall not make haste, shall not be ashamed or confounded.

O it was a terrible day when the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened, and the floods of divine wrath were poured forth upon an apostate world. Thousands of terror-stricken sinners, who had, perhaps, often mocked and ridiculed Noah while building the ark; then, as they watched the gathering waters, made haste to escape to some rising ground, and as the flood gathered around them even there, cast their anxious gaze to a still more lofty crag, and perished, perhaps, while they were making haste to escape thereto. On the other hand, Noah had believed God, and being "moved with fear," had "prepared an ark for the saving of his house." He believed, and while a guilty and unbelieving world was drowning, there was no need that he should make haste to escape from the waters of the flood. Safe in the ark, for "the Lord had shut him in," he could smile at the fury of the storm. He believed in God, and he was not ashamed.

So also, was it a fearful day when showers of burning sulphur descended upon guilty Sodom and Gomorrah, filling all hearts with terror and dismay, and involving men, women, and children in one general and awful destruction. Contemplate, for a moment, that terrible scene! Who are those young men, pressing their hands over their mouths to shut out the burning, suffocating atmosphere, casting their inflamed eyes to yonder neighboring mountain, and making haste, if it were now possible, to escape to a place of safety? They are the sons-in-law of Lot. Alas! it is now too late. They had heard the solemn warning from their father-in-law, but Lot had "seemed as one that mocked unto his sons-in-law," (Gen. xix. 14.) Lot and his daughters were now in safety, for they had heeded the angels' warning-" Escape to the mountain!" They had believed God, and were not ashamed. As for these wicked young men, they had treated with contempt the admonition of Lot. They had refused to believe, and were now ashamed and confounded. made haste, if it were possible, to escape from the suffocating flames, but they made haste in vain. The sentence had gone forth-"Behold! ye despisers, and wonder and perish!" and repentance came, now, too late. And thus, my hearers, shall it be in the day of judgment. Then those who trusted in falsehood shall find to their dismay, that "the hail shall sweep away their refuges of lies." They have built upon the sand, and they shall feel their foundation give way, and in that day shall their hopes perish. See! that terror-smitten company as they come forth from their graves, roused by that voice which shall awake the dead. Alas! alas! they feel that the hour of their judgment is come, and conscious guilt tells them that "righteous Judge" is now their enemy. Hark! that cry of agony—"Rocks fall on us! mountains, cover us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb!" but rocks and mountains are deaf to their cry. See! how they make haste to hide themselves, if it were possible, from the lightning of his eye. But they make haste in vain. They would not believe, and now the day of mercy is past; their dismay and confusion is complete!

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But O, how different the portion of the righteous! Rising from

the grave, they feel that the hour of their complete redemption has at length arrived. The promise is at length fulfilled—"I will ransom them from the power of the grave, I will redeem them from death. O death, I will be thy death! O grave, I will be thy destruction!" (Hosea xiii. 14, Welsh translation.) As they burst the fetters of the grave, they look upward, and behold the coming, the expected Saviour, and break forth in the joyful acclamation, "Lo! this is our God, we have waited for him, we will rejoice and be They believed on Jesus Christ, and now they are glad in him!" They built upon the rock of ages, and now, indeed. not ashamed. as ever before, they find him to be a tried stone, a sure foundation. Standing before the tribunal of the Judge, the believer in Jesus feels that in that Judge he has a Saviour, an Advocate, a Friend: and in reply to the demands of a violated law, he can point to Christ as his Redeemer from the curse, and as the Lord his Righteousness. In the beautiful words of Cowper, describing the scenes of the Judgment-

"All joy to the believer! he can speak,
Trembling, but joyful,—confident yet meek;
Since the dear hour that led me to thy foot,
And cut up all my follies by the root,
I never trusted in an arm but thine,
Nor hoped, but in thy righteousness divine.
While struggling in the vale of tears below,
That never failed, nor shall it fail me now."

O glorious and blessed promise! "he that believeth shall not make haste"—"shall not be ashamed or confounded world without end." May this promise, beloved brethren, be yours and mine! may we build all our hopes on Christ as the rock of ages, and thus find him to be a tried stone, a sure foundation! And then, in temptation and sorrow, in sickness and at death, at the judgment and in eternity, will he be our never-failing friend, and our portion forever!

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# OUR OWN SALVATION—THE WORK AND THE ENCOURAGEMENT.

#### BY REV. M. W. JACOBUS,

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"Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure."—Phil. ii. 12, 13.

A MAN who has undertaken to be saved, has entered upon the greatest possible work—a work which, as it looks for its consummation at the end of life, so is to engage all the energies of his life-There never was a more grievous deception of Satan, than that which satisfies the convert with his initial experiences, and settles him down upon them as the substance of salvation. All the crude ideas of getting religion by a few given exercises, and a certain short process of excitements and reliefs, so that soon it shall be all done and over, have come of that arch-deceiver, who ruins as completely by false hopes, as by infidelity. This urgency of the Apostle is therefore of most momentous import. The Christian course is called a race. And he exhorts the man who has entered the lists, to run on. The crown is not at this end, nor anywhere along the course; but at the other end-at the goal. Here is a WORK, only undertaken now, and only begun. All the undertaking and the beginning infer a vigorous and continuous prosecution. is a thing to be elaborated, carried out, completed. And because it is a man's own salvation, it is very plain that it must be a work demanding high personal endeavors, which are never to be remitted unto the end.

Our own salvation, therefore, he sets before us, as a plan to be executed—as a design to be fulfilled—as an edifice to be carried up to the top-stone. And as this salvation is not really accomplished, on our part, until life ceases, so the working out of this majestic plan is the grand business of one's lifetime; and the laborious workman puts the last stroke of the hammer to the building, with his last and dying breath.

But here it is to be understood, that this prosecution of the work also supposes the work really commenced. The language is susceptible of misapplication. The address is here, in the text, not to

the unconverted, but to those who have really undertaken-in whom, and by whom, a beginning has been made. It is not intended to set any man upon his own resources, until he is first fully cast upon the resources of God in Christ. None but such would understand the mental philosophy of the text. It is not meant to deceive any with the idea that they can undertake and work out their own salvation, all independently of the Almighty, and with no thanks to divine grace. We enter into no discussion here about the divine efficiency as consistent with the free agency. We take the fact, as it must be admitted, and as it is expressed in the text, that in this saving matter, man works out, and God works in. We are not compelled to describe the processes, any more than to explain the co-operation of soul and body in every action. We know from the fact itself, that such co-working is consistent. Every Christian finds it so in his experience, whatever his theory may be; and the man is only urged to his own proper part in the matter. We need not show how, in the highest sense, Christ has wrought out the salvation of every true believer, by his redeeming work; or how the plan employs the man's own energies, only renewing his will. The whole truth of the subject is implied in the text, and the positions

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are perfectly consistent.

First, then, it is here put among the leading encouragements to a Christian, that it is God who already worketh in him. That a good and gracious work is already begun in the believing heart by the Author of our salvation. "If there be any consolation in Christ," he says, go forward. If you have any comfort in his love. get more. If you have any fellowship of the spirit, any bowels and mercies, aim at an increase, and fulfilment. The way is most clearly opened to you. For this experience, however incipient, is to be recognized as a proof of that divine working, which gives the highest encouragements for the prosecution. You are to take these beginnings of a new life, and instead of being disheartened at the mere infancy of it, consider its high and heavenly origin, and be animated in the prospect of its development. If there be in you any genuine feature of the new birth, does it not argue that you are laid hold of by infinite grace, for your salvation? And you are "to follow after, if that you may apprehend that for which also you are apprehended of Christ Jesus." Seize these cheering proofs that "God hath not appointed you to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ." They are the encouraging hints to you of an eternal purpose, working already in you this incipient willing and doing. Every changed disposition, and every regenerate action, are God's gracious intimations to you, urging you on in the way of your complete and eternal redemption. You are not left to grope in the dark, awed and disheartened by impenetrable mysteries; for just so far as God's secret plan may be useful to be known in the attainment of salvation, so far it is opened to the true believer. The work is a present salvation from sin, as connected

with a future salvation from death. The name Jesus has this interpretation to every believer, "He shall save his people from their sins." The work is personal, therefore. It is present and practi-It is such, that if it is going on, you can see its progress in the progressive results. It is such as to engage your interest and energy at every step. To be saved from the sins which have debased you, and from the sins which still beset you, is to be your daily aim and ambition, as the essence of the great work; and never are you to be content a moment, except as you see this salvation going vigorously forward to the end. And so Christ does early whisper to the true disciple, "I have chosen you and ordained you, that you should go and bring forth fruit." "Fear not, little flock, he is yet saying to his believing people; "it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." And by unmistakable marks and tokens, he is already showing the timid heir of heaven all the promises, and seals, and covenants, and often, as it seems, his very name written in the Lamb's Book of Life. Are not these the strongest incentives held out, from that world of glory, to labor on to climb up the hill—to work out the salvation? This is the crown laid up for the Apostle, of which he knows beforehand. prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, which he declares himself to have been striving for as his one aim of life, and with all his energies.

We have now prepared the way to consider this practical subject from the proper point, and with its legitimate application—to show how one's salvation is to be worked out—and to urge these high in-

centives.

1. This charge of the Apostle is aimed against the natural perils of the case. It would be readily enough comprehended, in reference to any other undertaking. We all know what it is to work out a calculation to its results—what it is to work out a difficult plan to its execution—what it is to work out a personal deliverance by energetic labors—what it is to work out any enterprise to which zeal and vigor of mind and body can be applied. It is to employ our highest endeavors to compass the results, whether they be near or distant, whether they occupy us an hour or a lifetime. One of the English masters, when asked how long he had been at a certain picture, answered, "All my life." Has a man undertaken to be saved? Then this is only the greatest possible undertaking. Has he looked into the revealed plan, and consulted the divine party, and so entered upon the work? Then, here is simply an exhortation to that man to work on, under the most gracious auspices, with the strongest assurances of success, yet with fear and trembling at the parties concerned, and at the magnitude of interests involved. is an exhortation pressed home, in view of a natural tendency to run a brief season, and tire, or turn aside—to work, and weary of it-to fall under the power of Satan, in temptations that seem the more severe and artful, because of the effort to elude his snare.

How, in four cases out of five, the sower finds his instrumental work a wretched abortion! The way-side ones—the stony ground ones the thorny field ones—and then, at last, even the wheat, with the tares sown at night among it! Some seed snatched away at the very outset; some springing promptly, but, alas! no soil and no root: some growing up, but, oh! the thorns growing up faster, and by such a rank and ruinous overgrowth, choking all that was hopeful at first; and then, after a thousand other escapes, the remainder liable to be overrun with tares, maliciously sown by the adversary. How the Apostle seems to chill at the thought, when he hears God saving, "If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him?" How he adds, "We are not of them that draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul." How he gathers a volume of warnings into one brief sentence, and exclaims, in the ear of every heavenward traveller, "Remember Lot's wife!" How he paints the faithless, heartless adventurer, as the profitless ploughman, who, with hand to the plough, is looking back! How he cries out to those of slacking pace, "Ye did run well; who did hinder you?" It is, plainly enough, in the life-long elaboration of this great work, that there is the danger of being misled by error, or of giving up for discouragement, or of going back for an unquenched love of the world. One can see that his peril would be where he is to settle down upon fixed and final principles, and to go on after the novelty is off, and the excitement of a first change is abated, and he is to act upon the naked truth of the matter, against the trinity of foes-the world, the flesh, and the devil. Therefore the exhortation, "As ye have always obeyed, work out your own salvation with FEAR and TREMBLING.

2. We remark further, that it plainly falls to each to do a peculiar work in his own personal salvation. Each convert to Christ has his own character to be corrected, his own habits to be mastered, his own exposures to be guarded, his own personal weaknesses to be provided for, and his own peculiar tastes, that the cultivation of years had strengthened, to be battled with, now, and overcome. It is on this very account, that no two have had the self-same experiences in their first conversion. Each has come to Christ, but from his own particular starting-point, and with a history his own, and a mind his own, and therefore with mental exercises quite his own also. And so, in the pursuit, one has the strongest temptation from a quarter where another would find almost none. brings with him a disposition that has more marked blemishes than another. One has been living under the power of worldly habits, that have injured the very texture of the mind, and perverted the common trains of thought and feeling. One is a perfect novice in the Scripture. Another has known it from his youth up, until its passages have no force, almost, for the formality. Do you tell me that these have no peculiar work to do in their own personal salvation? It belongs to their very personality and identity, that they should now be called to wrestle, each for his own deliverance, and that according to the powers of evil under which they have more especially fallen. One has even to deny himself certain practices, not in themselves sinful, perhaps, but most mischievous to his own

mind and tendency.

We see, then, first, that all the work of self-inspection comes in here, to be daily prosecuted. This prevailing sense of religion as an individual matter, involving the renewal of one's own soul, the conquest of his own passions, the mastery of his own particular foes, and the attainment of his own salvation, is an essential ele-The idea that it is progressive, not in its vital ment of piety. principle, but in its results—that it is a work going on, an edifice carrying up in the way of Christian edification-this enters into And as you want to know the state of your all living discipleship. flocks and herds, so-only more intensely-you want to know the state of your religious attainments. Examination, and calculation. and vigorous action, accordingly must enter into the work. is to be done in his salvation, involves the plain matter-of-fact as to what each has, in his own heart and life, to be subdued, corrected, and delivered from. And to know this well, is only a first step; and to keep a close eye upon the progress day by day, is only a natural and necessary step in working out the salvation. It seems to belong only to a common honesty of purpose, that if there be a work going forward, and a personal work, it should be watched, and wrought out according to the aspects of it, and the prospects of success. It is because this is mainly a heart-work, that one is to keep turning within, in nice and critical inspections of feeling, and balancings of self, and weighings of motive and aim. You can see, that they who give up this self-criticism—this minute, private, faithful self-examination—give up the first principles. How can they work out what they are willingly ignorant of, and what they constantly neglect in the progressive and successive steps?

So also, secondly, a self-discipline is required in this work. They who know themselves, or who are in any habit of self-inspection, will find that their own salvation, to be wrought out at all, demands a vigorous and rigid self-discipline. To be schooling in divine truth—battling the enemy—shaping the plans, and tempers, and motives, by God's Word—treasuring up the defences of the Gospel, and putting on the whole armor of God—this is the To be sitting at the feet of Jesus—shunning tempdaily business. tations-casting aside every weight, and bringing every thought into captivity to Christ's obedience—this is the daily work. And this makes the necessity for "praying always," even with the armor on. What can they do who give a loose to their own hearts, yielding to whatever excitements and impulses may any time surround them? No close calculation of duty, or even of expediency, no setting of limits and guards upon their natural tastes, no pleading at the mercy-seat for checks upon their own tempers, and no earnest effort to overcome their former selves, and to be renewed in the spirit of their minds, how can they be in any training for the skies? Such have evidently no stated work in hand, touching this matter of their salvation. There is nothing which they are prosecuting with steady, steadfast aim, day by day. They are not, like the Apostle. exercising themselves to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and toward man-not struggling to keep the body under. This is not the necessity of a periodical fast, as though it were the season of the year that is to remind the Christian of his fastings. Ah! primitive Christians fasted for occasions in their lives, rather than for seasons in the calendar. When they were brought under strong temptation or affliction—when they were in some special danger of being overcome-when they were going out to some eminent duty—or when they felt the unusual risings of sin within them—then, for their self-discipline, they fasted. It might have been once in a week, or twice; but not twice because it was the Pharisee's custom, but if the soul's necessities seemed to demand it. Who can live the Christian life in such a world, and know nothing of self-discipline, with its special means of grace, its checks, and restraints, and correctives, and vet be working out at all his salvation? The fear and trembling may well come in

And this part of the saving work in one's own case includes a constant self-denial. Here the Apostle brings in the great pattern, Jesus Christ. Here he charges upon them a humility of temper, where there was every tendency to the opposite. Here he exhorts them to all the Christian graces, as they knew the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore he says, under the power of such an example, go on, and work out your own salvation; each of you go on wrestling with principalities and powers, striving to prevail against evil tempers, and to overcome spiritual foes, and to bring the soul into some likeness to the Great Exemplar, Jesus. Following the great Cross-bearer, let each man take up his own cross daily, and go on. Like the former process, it is a matter of every-day life. The occasions for it are constantly occurring. You must be denying yourselves ungodliness and wordly lust, and mortifying the flesh, with its affections. He who is not denying himself, is indulging himself in what shall be his ruin. The principle is plain. you apologize for your common tastes and tempers, that they are Have you not learned that this human nature is just that which is totally deprayed?—that this is that from which you are to be saved, if saved at all?—that the Christian warfare is against the natural appetites and aims?—that one who takes sides with Christ, takes sides against himself, condemning himself, and begging deliverance from self? Then it must needs be no strange thing-this self-denial. Then it must be a work immediately appertaining to one's own salvation, and he must be carrying it forward with the highest energies of his being. He must continue in it with all persistency and perseverance, though it be painful, though it take out a right eye, or take off a right hand. Will you spare yourselves all pain? You will not save yourselves by this, but rather secure you perdition. "He that saveth his life, shall lose it." "Woe to them that are at ease in Zion." Do you think it all one, whether you cultivate an old temper, or keep it down-whether you allow an old habit, however mischievous, or strive to slay itwhether you put off the old man, and put on the new man, or not? What effect must the one course or the other have upon your own salvation, as a work to be wrought out with proper fear of yourself, and proper trembling for the result? In this great work, the efficient agent is the most delicate. The Holy Ghost may be grieved by your follies, resisted by your backwardness, and quenched by your worldliness of mind. You will run the Christian race with patience, only by looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of your faith. You will deny yourselves ungodliness and worldly lust, only by looking for that blessed hope.

But especially, in all this work, and above all, must there be a hearty self-renunciation.—Work as you may, and as you must, if you are saved, yet there is not any or all of your work that can be boasted or trusted. Though you be working out your own salvation, still your only Saviour is Christ. Your work is always unfinished, imperfect, defective. His work is already finished and complete. Think of your salvation, at his hand, as "ready to be revealed in the last time," and herein you may greatly rejoice. Think of it as already wrought out by your Redeemer. Think of him as gone, now, to prepare a place for you, and waiting till you enter upon the full possession. Think of your house eternal in the heavens—your crown of righteousness-your robe, and harp, and palm. This will lead you, more and more, to cast away all human confidences-all trusts in self—all pride of opinion—all personal pretension. Faith in Christ—in his plan, in his power, and in his promise—is to make you work on, cheerfully and successfully, to the end. It is HE, from his risen glory, who sends forth his Spirit, which now works in your

And these all are items of the work, which admit of measures and degrees. The self-inspection may find out to-day more than it knew yesterday of the inner man. The self-discipline may keep under some taste or appetite to-day, which gained the mastery yesterday. The self-denial may cheerfully carry a cross to-day, which was only too much for yesterday. The self-renouncement may give up an indulgence, or reject a confidence, to-day, which was only attempted in vain hitherto. And herein consists the constant opportunity for working out one's own salvation.

heart.

And, finally, in all that pertains to a thorough self-devotement, amidst a world of duties and necessities, there is demand for this progress and execution. Who has finished this work already, that

so many are at ease in Zion? Who is yet the specimen of that entire self-sacrifice that we profess, and that the Master demands? In the petty selfishness that is working freely and undenied in the man, how is he working out his own salvation? How-when he devotes himself so sparingly to Christ's service-when he is so hard at work for himself, that the work of the Master is that most entirely declined and denied? Can you not see that you have a work to do, if you are ever saved, which shall require many a mighty effort, many a large devotement, many a loosing of the grasp upon the heart's idols, and many a relinquishment for Christ, where now it would seem like tearing the soul asunder? Have you. then, nothing daily to do? Was this whole work, in all its immense magnitude, completed in your first repentings and wrestlings. and turnings unto God? Ah! your salvation is not yet attained. He that works not out the mighty problem, loses the soul. He who feels no fear, no trembling, only betrays an ignorance of the work in its true nature, and in its awful issues. It demands all the intensity of your minds, all the energy of your bodies, all your ardor of soul, all your helps in the means below, and in the efficient power above.

Hence the high incentives here given by the apostle. "For it is God which worketh in you both the willing and the doing." Do you shrink away from the work, and say, "I cannot control these tempers. I am sold under sin. These tastes and desires are too strong for me?" But are they too mighty to be subdued by God's omnipotence? He worketh in you the willing and the doing. If you would ever quail before so vast an undertaking, with so many hindrances, and so little strength, consider that nothing is required of you without a promise in the Gospel to meet the case. Reformer used to have it for his Latin motto, "Only give what thou requirest, then require what thou wilt." You sink in despondency, and say you cannot work out your salvation. And you cannot, if there be no revealed methods, no warrants from above. You talk of God's will; but "this is the will of God, even your sanctification." Will you say that God cannot enable you? you forget the mercy-seat, where you can daily entreat according to daily necessities, and with a covenant covering all possible circumstances, and with promises set before you to plead?

Then, understand the Apostle. God does work in you both the will and the work—both the disposition and the execution. It is all your security that he is the efficient power. It is infinitely better than to have had for yourself the full, supreme control. being at the head, secures the connection between the means and the ends, where, else, you might have used the means in vain, as in your own worldly enterprises. Prayer applies all the divine

resources and promises.

And God works in you of his good pleasure. This is an encouragement. Do I say that, because he works savingly and freely, he works blindly, arbitrarily, without plan, without explanation?

No. Are you only to know that he works, but all in the dark—
no clue to his working? Not so. The good pleasure of his will
is revealed; it is expressed in the Gospel. The Gospel is called
"the good pleasure of his will, wherein he hath made us accepted
in the beloved." He works according to that gracious plan, of
which Christ Jesus is the way, and the truth, and the life. You
have no salvation without Christ's work, yet none without your
own work. And it is cheering to know, that this working in you
God doeth, without those hindrances of the Devil which make your
separate work miscarry.

And, remember, your salvation is not yet attained in the possession. It is set at the life's end, to command the highest energies of the lifetime. It is held out from the skies, to lift the soul up from the world. The man is to work it out, with a constant fear and trembling lest he fail, and lose so eternal a prize by negligence or ease. Remember; the promises of the Revelation are only for the man who endureth unto the end—who properly works out, to its consummation, what has been begun. If you desist, you give up

all the splendid results.

And remember, too, that one's own salvation is to be worked out by all this personal, persevering labor, because the salvation is his own, and because this salvation itself shall be according to the deeds done in the body. A son may have an education given him, vet how different will it be, according as there is application and improvement, or not. One man may have a legacy left him, and yet how it may either be squandered or augmented by the daily conduct. Every phase and feature of each man's inheritance there, will bear the marks of his own labor here. It will be, in this high sense, according as he himself has wrought it out. For it must needs be this very soul of yours, as it is here exercised, disciplined, and expanded, that shall enter into rest, and its own works will follow it. I could ask you, then, if you have no care what kind of a salvation you shall work out for your own souls-whether it be like Paul's or like the dying thief's. You would care what kind of a fortune you shall work out-what kind of a name and character among men you shall work out. And when it is put with you to give a cast to the magnificence of your heavenly estateswhen you may now be daily laying up treasures in heaven—and when your capacity for that eternal enjoyment, and your position in the heavenly throng, are surely to be determined by your present living—can you be heedless of such a summons to the majestic work? Regard each day, each act of life, as to be projected on the scale of eternity. And how many ages upon ages must answer to each hour, and get a shape from its doings? Who, then, can desist from the work, or who can work it out without fear and trembling? My brethren, forget the things that are behind, and reach forth to those things that are before, AND PRESS TOWARD THE MARK FOR THE PRIZE OF THE HIGH CALLING OF GOD IN CHRIST JESUS.

What shall we say to such as have not begun this work? He that lavs no hand to his own salvation, is laboring at his own perdi-He is working this out for himself. Late and early, at home and abroad, lying down, and rising up, this one thing he does. In thought, in word, in action, always industrious at this, he is never remitting it, but ever giving it some further perfectness and fulness. Amongst means of grace, and under calls of the Gospel, on Sabbaths and other days, without rest, whatever else he does or leaves undone, this he is working out-working out to its awful completion. No work of man was ever so elaborate, so life-long, so full of toil and persistency, and success. And at the end, it is his own perdition that is the creature of his own handiwork—the product of his own industry—the achievement of his own lifetime. Stop this work, we beseech you, and "strive to enter in at the strait gate." It is made your great duty to be saved-your great sin, and shame, and sorrow, to be lost!

#### POWER WITH GOD.

#### A FRAGMENT FROM A DISCOURSE BY THE EDITOR.

"As a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed."-GEN. xxii. 28.

The godly man has power with God. Would that this truth were engraven indelibly upon every heart in which has been kindled the flame of divine love! Prayer is power to prevail with God. Viewed in this light, what a precious gift is it from heaven to men! It is a key to the storehouse of God. It opens the repository of heaven's choicest blessings, and brings them down to earth. Happy is he who possesses it. He has influence at the throne of God. He can move the arm that moves the destinies of the universe.

Christians who feel an interest in the conversion of their ungodly friends, seldom realize the amount of influence they possess at the mercy-seat. They do not take God at his word. They do not believe they have power to prevail with him. Their addresses to the throne of grace demonstrate their unbelief. They ask for small things; or if they pray for greater, they have little expectation of receiving them. Their language shows it. It is the prayer that will take no denial that prevails with God. It is the wrestling of Jacob. Jacob interceded all night with the Lord; and when the day dawned, and he was reminded that it was time for him to desist and attend to his flocks, and herds, he replied, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." He was blest. God said to him, "Thy name shall be called no more Jacob (that is, one who supplants another,) but Israel (warrior with God, as the name signifies); for as a prince hast thou power with God and with man, and hast prevailed."

Power with God! Oh, if his children believed, felt, realized this, what intercessions would they not make for an ungodly world! Power with God! Did the church feel this, as they ought, the moral foundations of the world would be moved, and the kingdom of the Messiah speedily and permanently established. They do not feel it. Why is it, when God seems almost to anticipate our faith, and to go before us in bestowing his blessings? Why is it, when we know they have received immediate and signal answers to our prayers for the impenitent? Why is it? How can we be so faithless, so skeptical, so ready to distrust God? Why,

every one who will give himself the trouble to watch the phenomena of the moral world, and to inquire for their causes, must see that the intercessions of the godly man prevail with God. Unconverted men even, with all their prejudices against spiritual religion, and all their obtuseness of moral vision, are generally too observing not to notice, and too honest not to acknowledge it. It is almost self-evident. The man who is eminently pious, walks with God; and it is plain as a sunbeam, that when he speaks, God hears.

We wonder and complain, sometimes, that our prayers for the outpouring of the Spirit, and for the conversion of sinners, are not answered. But have we wrestled with God? Have we been suitably impressed with a sense of the value of souls, and have we besieged the throne of grace for them? When have we agonized in prayer for their conversion? How often have our hearts yearned over them? How often, while reflecting upon their condition, have we, with tears, sought the mercy-seat, and "told Je-How often has our private Bethel witnessed fervent, importunate intercession for them? When have we felt and interceded for their salvation, as Abraham felt and interceded for the cities of the plain? Has such incense as this ever ascended from our altars? Has such been the character of our prayers? And shall we, in whose breasts the Spirit has lighted up a flame of holy love, shall we feel little anxiety that others should share in that love? Shall we, who are heirs to a crown of unfading glory, and who hope soon to wear it, feel little interested to secure such a crown for our unconverted friends? Shall we withhold our intercessions, and fold our arms in apathy and indifference, in the midst of our ungodly friends and relations? Is it a time to sleep, when members of our own families are unreconciled to God, and exposed to his wrath?

We can scarcely open our eyes, without beholding those who are tenderly allied to us by the ties of friendship, and some who sustain a closer relation to us as our kindred, who "have no hope, and are without God in the world." They are "treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath." The edict of retribution has gone forth. They are already sentenced, and the storm of Jehovah's

vengeance is impending.

O Christian! do you know that you have influence with God? Do you know what encouragement you have to intercede for those whom you love? You may avert the doom that threatens them. Your prayers may secure their introduction into the family of God, and a title to the rank and privileges of sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty. Then, plead for their salvation. Plead with a warm heart. Plead with faith and earnestness, and implicit reliance on the efficacy of the Holy Ghost. Such intercessions are never thrown away.

#### XI.

#### THE NIGHT NO TIME FOR LABOR.

## BY REV. EDWIN F. HATFIELD,

"The night cometh, when no man can work."-John ix. 4.

The Sabbath is a day of rest. The labor, that is lawful and proper on other days of the week, must then be suspended. "Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work. But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord, thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work."

The sin of our day is to set this divine law aside; to treat it as part and parcel of a venerable code, once in use, and of great value to an ancient people, but long since abrogated, and of no present obligation. Or, if it be retained as a part of the moral law, its sanctions are, for the most part, disregarded, and its claims neglected. But, in the days of Jesus of Nazareth, it was far otherwise. So strictly was the very letter of the law regarded, by Scribes and Pharisees, and the great body of the Jewish people, that even works of necessity and mercy were treated as transgressions, if performed on the Sabbath.

This erroneous interpretation and application our Saviour endeavored to correct, and frequently rebuked, even at the hazard of being himself treated as a Sabbath-breaker. We have an instance of the kind, in the chapter from which the text is taken. The interview with the man born blind, as here narrated, and the restoration of the man to sight, took place on the Sabbath. Knowing well what use his enemies would make of the transaction, and determined to put the seal of his reprobation on a superstition on inhuman and wicked, as well as to set an example of doing good at all times and on every occasion, he introduces his intention with this justification of the proceeding,—"I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day; the night cometh when no man can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." He then gives sight to the blind, and dismisses him to his home.

Thus he teaches, most emphatically, that no opportunities of doing good are to be lost, or deferred, on account of the sacredness of the

day: that doing-days will soon be gone, and that doing good is the great errand of life. This errand is to be executed diligently, while it is day,—before the night comes, when no man can work.

Such were the occasion and design of the language of the Re. deemer, to which your attention is now to be directed. When he says,-" The night cometh when no man can work,"-he appeals to a well-known and universally-recognized law of nature. is to be done by day, and not by night. The night is the season for rest; the day for labor.

In accordance with this principle, and sustained by this high

authority, I shall proceed to show, that

THE BUSINESS OF THIS WORLD SHOULD ORDINARILY BE TRANSACTED BY DAY, AND NOT BY NIGHT.

A state of labor is the natural state of man on earth. Necessity is laid on him to put forth his powers of body and mind in vigorous Even in paradise, surrounded with abundance of nourishing fruits, and under no necessity to provide, by the labor of his body, for the gratification of hunger and thirst, a work is given him to do. "And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it." Employment, an active, vigorous employment, of the powers of both body and mind, and a daily succession of such occupations, are essential alike to the health of the body and the comfort of the mind. When Paul wrote to his fellow-servant in the gospel, that "if any would not work, neither should he eat," he might have referred to the constitution of man's nature, that forbids to the indolent that relish for food which results from vigorous exercise. It is an established law of our physical system, that labor, exercise, motion, activity, are indispensable to health, to vigor, to enjoyment. It is seen, in the case of the child, ever in motion, and never at rest, save when asleep.

Labor may be regarded as the first great law of our being. It is demanded in every season of life, more or less, according to our capacity. Every station and every class in society are subject to the law of industry, and none can disregard it with impunity. Wealth, honor, wisdom, virtue, and every blessing of mortal life, as well as the joys of heaven, are ordinarily made dependent on labor. "Industry," it has been well observed, "is a virtue of a very diffusive nature and influence, stretching itself through all our affairs, and twisting itself with every concern we have; so that no business can be well managed, no design accomplished, no good ob-

tained without it."

The capacity and the opportunity to labor are, therefore, to be acknowledged as a positive blessing; and, when our circumstances imperatively require it, the necessity is to be regarded as a great good, and not an evil. It is a price put into our hands to obtain the richest blessings of life.

"No good of worth sublime will Heaven permit,
To light on man as from the passing air;
The lamp of genius, though by nature lit,
If not protected, pruned, and fed with care,
Soon dies or runs to waste with fitful glare.
Then be thy thoughts to work divine addressed;
Do something—do it soon—with all thy might;
An angel's wing would droop if long at rest,
And God himself, inactive, were no longer blest."

Labor gives a zest to all our enjoyments. It makes the plainest food savory, gives buoyancy to our spirits, and sweetness to our sleep. "The sleep of a laboring man is sweet." That for which we labor, on which we bestow our strength, which has cost us much anxiety, thought, and effort of body or mind, acquires a peculiar value in our estimation. The fortune that we have earned by our own exertions is far more prized than the inheritance received from a friend departed. "The substance of a diligent man is

precious." "In all labor there is profit."

We are not, therefore, to be understood as advocates for idleness. if we suggest, that the season for labor may be too greatly disproportioned to the season for rest and recreation. Our purpose is the very opposite, as will yet appear. We do not forget, that an apostle in the name of Christ has enjoined upon the followers of Jesus, exhorting and commanding them, "that with quietness they work and eat their own bread." No bread so sweet as your ownthat which you have procured by your own labor. The religion of the gospel demands a full occupation of all our powers in the service of our God, and our fellow-men. It gives no countenance to those disorderly professors, who are described as "working not at all, but are busy-bodies"—not at work, but over work; as in the original. Its language is to one and all—"Study to be quiet, to do your own business, and to work with your own hands: that ye may walk honestly towards them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing." It speaks, in language of not unmerited severity, of those who "learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house: and not only idle, but tattlers also, and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not."

Labor, therefore, whatever the indolent, the purse-proud, the slave-driver, and the petted child of fashion, may deem it, is honorable in all; in the prince as well as the peasant, the master as well as the servant, the mistress as well as the maid, the employer as well as the laborer. How busy is universal Nature! The heavens and the earth are incessantly at work, fulfilling the great purpose of their creation. "The heavens," says one, "do roll with unwearied motion; the sun and stars do perpetually dart their influence; the earth is ever laboring in the birth and nourishment of plants; the plants are drawing sap, and sprouting out fruits and seeds, to feed us and propagate themselves; the rivers are running, the seas are tossing, the winds are blustering, to keep the elements

sweet in which we live. . . . . . Every living creature is employed in providing for its sustenance; the blessed spirits are always on the wing in dispatching the commands of God, and ministering succor to us; . . . yea, God himself, although immovably and infinitely happy, is yet immensely careful, and everlastingly busy." "My Father," saith Jesus, "worketh hitherto, and I work." So that it is literally true, that "all things are full of labor."

Well for us that it is so. What would this world be, but a wilderness, and its people but barbarians, were it not for the labor both of hands and heads? It is labor that has made man and the world in which he dwells what they are. We owe to it whatever is useful, curious, elegant, grand, and admirable in our edifices, equipage, furniture, modes of transit, and means of social and intellectual enjoyment. Labor is the source of all our wealth and worldly comfort.

Discard, then, at once and for ever, the thought, that it is mean, shameful, or a disgrace, to labor. Nothing is more honorable. No calling is more worthy of regard than that which demands laborious service. The man, whose labor and skill give increased value to the soil, or any of its products, is more to be honored than any idler, or even than he, through whose hands those products pass unchanged. Cherish the love of labor. Hold it in high esteem. It is the palladium of Independence, the parent of health, of energy, of virtue even, and a noble inheritance derived from the founders of our republic.

Be ashamed, not that your circumstances have made it necessary for you to toil, but that you are doing nothing, that you eat the fruit of other men's labors, that you render no equivalent for your dependence, that you live a life of idleness, are a mere drone in the hive, a hindrance and an incumbrance, a consumer but not a producer, a burden and a pest, a moth, and not a bee:—

"How doth the little busy bee improve each shining hour, And gather honey all the day from every opening flower! In works of labor, or of skill, I would be busy too, For Satan finds some mischief still for idle hands to do."

See to it, then, that you have something to do, that you do it, and that you do it well; that you waste not your life in idleness, and spend an eternity in shame. The charge of the Great Master to all his servants is, "Occupy till I come."

But the wise man has very pertinently observed, "To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven." Man cannot always work. The pure ethereal spirits round the throne may without ceasing, day and night, for ever continue the work of praise, or be ever on the wing. But these animal frames were not so made. They cannot endure incessant labor. The body soon feels the need of rest and relaxation, when its powers are tasked. It must frequently be recruited with food and

sleep, or it will lose the power to labor. Exhausted nature, when denied these indispensable means of relief and restoration, will flag

and sink, crushed beneath the insupportable burden.

The all-wise Author of our being has made a two-fold provision for the alternation of labor and rest. By his own example in the beginning of the creation, and by positive enactment, he requires one seventh part of all our time to be given to the purposes of devotion, and exempted from ordinary labor. "In it thou shalt not do any work." "The Sabbath was made for man"—for man's comfort, health, strength, and salvation. It is the laborer's friend. It interposes between the master and the servant; and demands for the stalled jade a cessation from toil. Admirable provision! How wonderfully it promotes the vigor, and efficiency,—how greatly it prolongs the life, of him who keeps it! The man who breaks it will find that he robs himself more than his God. In keeping this commandment there is great reward.

Of the remaining portion of our time, it is said, "Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work." But it is not to be expected that the whole gross of hours is to be incessantly occupied. Nor is such the meaning of the injunction. All our daily labor is to be done during the six days, and not on the seventh. Of these six days, as already intimated, a portion only can be given to work. Food must be taken; sleep, also; and recreation. Time, of course, must be allotted for these purposes, and in a certain ratio. It must be ample for the ends to be secured—must bear a reasonable proportion to that which is given to labor, or the power to labor will be diminished, and erelong exhausted, and life itself be unduly shortened. These laws of our being have been put to the fullest proof. They have developed themselves in universal experience.

These seasons of rest from labor, moreover, must recur at regular intervals, as appears from another provision of the Author of our being. The earth has, in a most wonderful manner, received from the Creator an impulse that, from the beginning, has driven it, once every 24 hours, around its axis, presenting to every portion of its surface a regular alternation of day and night. The light of the sun, so necessary to labor, is thus, at stated intervals, withdrawn. Obedient to the demands of their physical constitutions, all the orders of animated nature, with very few exceptions, seek, as the light departs, a season of repose. The fowls of the air, the beasts of the field, and man, also, find a law within them, requiring a cessation from labor. The brute creation obey this primeval law, and reap the reward of obedience. Man, too, when not corrupted by luxurious habits, and the laws of despotic fashion, obeys the requirements of his nature, and yields to the divine impulse.

This is the law to which the Saviour of man refers in the words of the text. That law requires all our work to be done by day, as much as the divine enactment of the Sabbath requires all our work to be done during the six days, and not on the seventh. "I must

work... while it is day. The night cometh when no man can work." He appeals to a law, an established law, of nature; a law written on man's constitution;—to the universal sense of mankind. That sense has been fully ascertained, and put on record. Nothing pertaining to man has been more fully determined. Everywhere, and in all ages, the doctrine has been maintained, that the

day, and not the night, is the time for work.

It is not asserted, nor does the Saviour mean to affirm, that work cannot be done at all by night. No one, surely, would risk his reputation by such an affirmation. We know it can. We know that it is done to an extent that demands investigation, inquiry, and even interposition. The text is one of many similar ones, in which the inability spoken of is not strictly of a physical nature. Work can be done by night, but not with impunity. It is such a transgression of a fixed law, as must result in serious injury to the transgressor. No man can sin against his own nature, and not feel the effects of it. Sooner or later the injury will be developed. When, therefore, it is said, "The night cometh when no man can work," we are to understand the Saviour as teaching, that, agreeably to a well-known and divinely-established law, man's daily labor is ordinarily and properly to be suspended by night.

Thus far we have unquestionable authority for our position. The will of God, in this matter, is fully ascertained, and in all respects concurs with man's best good. It is never safe to violate any law of God, much less a law of our own nature. It matters not who does it. Their doing it does not make it right. It still remains the law—the truth—that the night is the time for rest, for

sleep.

The extent, to which the violation of this requirement is carried, is affecting very seriously the health and energies of the people. It is very common, as most of you know, for the lovers of pleasure, of both sexes, and all grades in society, to occupy, occasionally, nearly the whole night in the labor of the dance, and in the exciting and exhausting diversions of the ball-room and pleasure-party. The night is converted, by artificial means, into the brilliancy of the day, and the time that should be given to repose is squandered on the passion for mirth and folly. With a good constitution, you may endure it for a season; but "ye have sinned against the Lord, and be sure your sin will find you out." Sooner or later, according to the strength of that constitution, you will reap the fruit of your folly, with unavailing regret.

When it is remembered, that this devotion of a large portion of the night to folly, and at some seasons, and in certain circles, several nights of every week, is demanded by the laws of fashion, and that these laws are implicitly obeyed,—when, too, it is known, that they, who are subjects of the realm of fashion, are, for the most part, the offspring of constitutions thus broken down, and carry within them the consequent infirmities of such a birth and training,— is it to be thought strange, that the deadly consumption sweeps away so large a portion of the young and lovely before they have lived out half their days? Must they not pay the forfeit of their folly, and suffer for the violation of the inexorable demands of their nature? Need we wonder that so many parents are called to weep in sackcloth over the dust of their manly sons and blooming daughters, cut down in the morning of their life, when they themselves have taught them to transgress this imperative law of their being? When shall it be, as God has ordained, that men will learn that the night is the time for rest?

It is greatly to be deplored, that so many of the trades are carried on by night-that many employers think it to be for their interest to keep their machinery in operation by night, as well as by It is a very great drawback to the pleasure with which we peruse the morning paper, that, in order to furnish us with the gratification, scores of our fellow-men have been obliged to labor all the night, or the greater part of it, in the setting of type, in the press-room, in the procuring of expresses, and the like. it is a serious evil. It draws upon their very life-blood.

great as is the evil, I can now only allude to it.

In determining the proportions of time that may properly be devoted to labor, we have thus far been able only to distinguish between the day and the night, and to ascertain that our daily labor is ordinarily to be done "while it is day." We are yet to ascertain, by a separation of the day from the night, the proper proportion of time to be given to work. If the day be measured by the shining of the sun, it is nowhere of a uniform length. It differs in different latitudes, and in the same latitude at different seasons of the year. In such cases, it is obviously proper to ascertain the average relation of the day to the night throughout the world, and so to determine the question. Such was our Saviour's understand-Thus he asks the question, on another occasion, ing of the matter. "Are there not twelve hours in the day?" Such was the understanding of the world then, and such it is now. Twelve hours of sun, and twelve of shade, divide and fill up the day.

The day, therefore, is practically to be regarded as of twelve hours' duration, and no more. This is the portion of time during which labor is to be performed. A greater amount is in no sense It is enough for all practical purposes. During that requisite. time, the whole business of the day may and ought to be transact-The labor of man need not, in an ordinary state of society, be \* prolonged beyond this rate, for the purposes of a comfortable sus-

tenance.

Furthermore, it is capable of proof, that, where this proportion of time is exceeded habitually, the human frame ordinarily gives way, and suffers injury. It cannot endure it. I have already intimated, This exercise, that exercise is indispensable to perfect health. however, if unduly prolonged, or too active or laborious, becomes XXIV

hurtful, destructive of health. By careful observation from age to age, by extended investigation on the part of medical science, and of civilians, results have been attained, which clearly develop the fact, that the human system cannot ordinarily endure continued labor more than twelve hours daily, including the time needful

for the taking of food.

So deep-seated and so general has been the conviction that such is the case, as to constrain the legislatures of enlightened nations to interpose between the avarice of the employer and the over-tasked laborer, by enactments defining the number of hours that shall ordinarily be reckoned as constituting a day's work. In the fourth year of Queen Elizabeth, A. D. 1563, it was enacted, in respect to laborers, that "if they work by the day or by the week, they must continue working from five in the morning till after seven at night, from the middle of March to the middle of September; and all the rest of the year, from twilight to twilight: only, from March to September, as aforesaid, they are to be allowed two hours for breakfast, dinner, and drinking; and from the middle of May to the middle of August, half an hour more for sleeping; and all the rest of the year, an hour and a half for breakfast and dinner: and for the absence of every hour, the master may stop one penny out of the wages." The utmost that could, even in that age of hardy. robust, and athletic men, be required, in the most favorable season of the year, as a day's labor, was twelve hours; while the average for the year came short of eleven.

In several of the States of our Union, laws have been passed in relation to the labor of convicts, the necessity of which has grown out of the same general fact to which I have alluded. Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, and Georgia, the following humane enactment has found a place among their laws:-"Such offenders (convicts), unless prevented by ill health, shall be employed in work every day in the year, except Sundays, and such days when they shall be confined in the solitary cells; and the hours of work, in each day, shall be as many as the season of the year (with an interval of half an hour for breakfast, and an hour for dinner) will permit; but not exceeding eight hours, in the months of November, December, and January; nine hours, in the months of February and October; and ten hours in the rest of the year." Nothing but a decided conviction of the inhumanity of exacting more than the human system will endure, could have prompted such an enactment, in the case of men whose crimes had made them amenable to the punishment of imprisonment at hard labor.

In the consolidated Slave Act of Jamaica, W. I., passed March 2d, 1792, provision was made for the allowance of several holidays to the unfortunate bondmen, and one day in every fortnight, exclusive of Sundays, to cultivate their own provision-grounds. Besides these provisions, it was enacted, "that every field-slave, on such plantation or settlement, shall, on work-days, be allowed,

according to custom, half an hour for breakfast, and two hours for dinner; and that no slave shall be compelled to any manner of field-work upon the plantation, before the hour of five in the morning, or after the hour of seven at night, except during the time of crop, under the penalty of fifty pounds." These laws were made by slaveholders, for the regulation of their own slaves, from whom they had every inducement to exact all the labor that could be performed, without seriously impairing their health, and shortening their lives. Yet the most that they dared to require was, a daily labor of eleven hours and a half, in at least two portions, with an interval of two hours for rest.

Such facts are not to be passed over in silence. They speak volumes for the position that I have now taken. It would be difficult to find any civilized people, at the present day, who would venture to enact a law requiring even convicts to labor at any other than in the day-time. Our own Revised Statutes simply demand, that they "shall be kept constantly employed at hard labor during the day-time, except when incapable of laboring by reason of sickness or bodily infirmity." It would be regarded as inhuman to

require them to work by night.

The modern legislation of the British government has been in accordance with these views. In the 42d year of George III., 1802, an act was passed, at the instance of Sir Robert Peel, himself a manufacturer, by which the labor of apprentices in factories was limited to twelve hours, and not permitted at night. In 1816, the same distinguished commoner procured the passage of a resolution for a committee of the House of Commons to make investigation into the evils of the factory-system. Deep was the indignation, when the report of this committee brought out the fact, that great numbers of children even were worked from five in the morning till eight at night, all the year round; and that, in making up lost time, they frequently worked from five in the morning till ten at night. The inquiry resulted in the passage of an act, making it unlawful to require of any factory laborer, under eighteen years of age, more than sixty-nine hours of labor during the week, or eleven and a half hours daily.

In 1832, it was proposed to reduce the time to fifty-eight hours in the week, for all under eighteen years of age. This proposition gave rise to another commission of inquiry, fifteen in number, five of whom were of the medical profession, commonly known as the "Factory Commission." A vast amount of facts, bearing on this question, was thus collected, by which it was ascertained, that the hours of labor in Scotland were from twelve to twelve and a half; in the north-eastern district of England, twelve; in Manchester, twelve; and in the West of England, often not more than

ten.

In 1841, another commission was raised, called the "Children's Employment Commission," who extended their investigations

into the condition of the laborer, in other trades and manufac. Their reports, published in 1842 and 1843, are painfully interesting, and develop a vast amount of suffering among females and children, particularly occasioned by long confinement to work. and the occupation of a portion of the night in labor. In relation to the millinery establishments of the metropolis, Sir James Clarke. Bart., physician to the Queen, testified as follows:—" I have found the mode of life of these poor girls such as no constitution could Worked from six in the morning till twelve at night. with the exception of the short intervals allowed for their meals, in close rooms, and passing the few hours allowed for rest in still more close and crowded apartments—a mode of life more completely calculated to destroy human health could scarcely be contrived; and this at a period of life, when exercise in the open air. and a due proportion of rest, are essential to the development of the system.'

No wonder that numerous and most highly respectable medical men should testify, in relation to this over-working and working by night, "Their constitution receives a shock, from which it never recovers. They may leave off work for a period, they may go into the country to their friends, but they never regain their health. Indigestion in its most severe form, palpitation of the heart, pulmonary affections threatening consumption, and various affections of the eyes, great constitutional weakness, indicated by a degree of pallor, or bloodless condition of the body,—prevail." Again, the report says, that "all the witnesses, medical and others, spoke of the very frequent occurrence of consumption, which carries off a

large number of victims."

Such are some of the effects of overworking, of occupying a larger proportion of time than is proper in labor, of devoting the hours of the night, in part, as well as of the day, to toil, to close occupation. How truly might the humane and wise Redeemer speak of the night as the time "when no man can work!"—when

no man can work, with impunity.

These remarks are applicable, not alone to the trades and handicrafts that require much muscular exertion, but to all kinds of business, and literary or mental labor. Any close and incessant occupation of the mind is labor, the hardest kind of labor, the most wearisome to the flesh, the most exhausting to the spirits, the most injurious to health. When, therefore, we speak of labor, we are to be understood as referring to the daily pursuits of business, whatever they may be. All business of this description should, if possible, be done by day, and not by night; should not occupy more than the twelve hours of the day. Nothing is gained, on the whole, by prolonging the labor of the day after nightfall.

Such is the general conviction of men engaged in mechanical and agricultural pursuits. It would be deemed oppressive and inhuman for the farmer, the builder, the manufacturer, in this land, to exact more than ten hours, or at the most twelve, from those in their employ. Every morning, except on the Sabbath, you may see the industrious mechanic, and other laborers, pursuing their way, at seven o'clock, to their daily work. If you enter their shops at twelve, or at any time between twelve and one, you find their work suspended; and, as the clock strikes six in the evening, you may see them issuing from their places of labor, and almost thronging our thoroughfares. Their work is done for the day. The evening is theirs. They may recreate and rest. They may engage in the pleasing relaxations of social life, may obtain information and pleasure by reading, or engage in devotional exercises in the place of prayer, or be entertained by religious or scientific pleasures.

Or, if we betake ourselves to country life, the same rule of labor is found to prevail. At the going down of the sun, and as twilight begins, how affectingly does the scene remind us of the lovely

picture sketched by Gray:-

"The curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
The lowing herd winds slowly o'er the lea,
The ploughman homeward plods his weary way,
And leaves the world to darkness and to me.
Now fades the glimmering landscape on the sight,
And all the air a solemn stillness holds,
Save where the beetle wheels his droning flight,
And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds."

How such a picture recalls the days of childhood and youth, when we, too, whose homes were removed from the whirl and dissipation of city life, were wont to revel in such scenes of rural bliss! Shall it ever be, we are ready to ask, with a long-drawn sigh,

that such will again be our favored lot?

Alas! that we have nothing here, in this busy mart, to answer to the poet's sketch! No sweet repose to the wearied laborer, in numerous branches of trade and toil! No rest to the soles of their feet, or to their wearied hands! It is work, work, work; toil, toil, toil! The night, with many, is as busy as the day. From early morn until late at night, the poor drudge toils on, and wears out his life, his heart, his soul. Not an hour can be spared from the everlasting drudgery, for purposes of health. Wealth is all. To obtain it, all else must be sacrificed. Every wakeful hour must be exacted, every social comfort relinquished, everything like mental, and moral, and religious improvement discarded, as out of the question.

It has already been said, that, even in our cities, the daily labor of the mechanic and the craftsman is done at six of the clock in the evening. There are exceptions to be made to this general statement. The men who provide the clothing for our bodies, the shoes for our feet, bread and meat for our tables, and the morning news for our information, with others, must still toil on, and wear out their lives, in working by night for our gratification. Not to

speak of the thousands of seamstresses, of the feebler and gentler sex, whose necessities compel them to labor, of whom we have already heard, in the report of the British commission, and whose worn-out frames are weekly swelling the fearful item of consump. tion in our bills of mortality,-passing by all these, let me call your attention to the almost numberless shops and stores, by which our principal streets are illuminated night after night, until nine, ten, eleven, or even twelve o'clock. In each of these stores there is an employer—one or more. In most of them there are clerks, seldom less than two, and frequently a score or more. These employers and their clerks are engaged in traffic, exposing for sale the products of every land, and an infinite variety of goods designed for raiment, food, equipage, and convenience. From the earliest hour of the day, their work begins. As the mechanic passes by, at seven in the morning, to his well-regulated labor, he finds these places of business open, and prepared for the traffic of the day. As he returns from his toil, at six in the evening, they are open still. As he goes forth at night, and returns from a social circle, where he has tasted some of the purest enjoyments of life, still he finds that the poor trader and his clerks are yet on their feet, and pursuing their wearisome, exhausting work.

Why all this? What dire necessity is it, that compels so many of our tradesmen to pursue their business three, four, and even, in some cases, five and six hours longer in the day than the mechanic and his workmen? Why may not all the busy hum of trade be suspended, in all departments of business, at one and the same hour? Why, when the plane, the saw, the hammer, the sledge, the trowel, and the spade, are dropped, may not the place of merchandise be closed, and the long-confined, wearied tradesman, and his clerks, be set free? If work must be done after working hours, why not employ a double set of hands, as in many of the public

offices now, and also in some private establishments?

On this topic you will indulge me for once, I trust, though it may seem foreign to my vocation. It is not foreign. It is one in which I, as a minister of the Gospel, have, and ought to have, a deep and abiding interest. I am set for the defence of human rights, as well as of the Gospel—the rights of man, as well as of God. It is my province to plead the cause of suffering humanity; to interpose between oppression and its victims; to give a trumpet-voice to the command, "Thou shalt not kill;" to remind my fellow-candidates for immortality, "that man doth not live by bread only;" that there are other things to be done in this world besides the getting of gain; and that time must be allowed and taken for domestic duties, for self-improvement, for the culture of the mind and the heart, and for the exercise of the varied social gifts of our Divine Benefactor.

You will indulge me, as one that has a right to speak on such a theme. It is from sad and painful experience that I testify. Are any of you in the service of the merchant, as his agents or clerks? So was I, for five long years and more. Well do I know the exhausting nature of your employment. Fully have I experienced your privations. To this very day do I suffer from the long confinement of those wearisome hours, when, from six in the morning until ten and eleven at night, I scarcely knew any cessation, any relaxation, from the toils of trade; when, with morbid appetite, my daily food was taken in haste, with scarcely an opportunity for healthful digestion. As one, therefore, of yourselves—as one who, in the recollection of past griefs and grievances, can say, quorum pars fui—I may be permitted to speak. I must speak and plead.

Humanity and religion alike demand it.

And why must I plead in vain? Will the employer not regard He will. He was once himself a clerk, and never can he forget his own privations. If then he was a slave to business, what is he now? A galley-slave. Has he not a home? But he is denied its comforts. Has he a wife and children? How seldom can he indulge himself in their society, save on the Sabbath; and how little can he care for the young immortals committed to his charge! How great the sacrifice to one, who is so constituted as as to derive his chief earthly enjoyment from the exercise and cultivation of the tender affections! Oh! no; the employer will not be deaf to our appeals. If some will be, others will not. It was at their request that I gave this subject a place in my pulpit discussions. Many of them are eager for the contemplated change, and have already taken an active and highly-commendable part in the agitation of the subject.

But others still hold out. On what ground? It is urged by some that it will be attended with pecuniary loss to the employer. To this objection it may be replied at once, that, if all trade and business be suspended at six or seven in the evening, ample time will be given in the day-time for the disposal of goods, and none the losers thereby. The trade that is now transacted in the evening will be brought into the day, and the same amount of goods disposed of. Such is now the case with the wholesale trade. No one suffers by putting an end to traffic in these immense establish-

ments, at the going down of the sun.

It is questionable, however, whether, as at present conducted, the evening trade will pay expenses. Shoppers understand that there is a greater liability to deception as respects the quality, color, and completeness of goods, when seen only in the evening; and are slow to purchase them. If wise, they would always take the daylight for such purchases. If the cost of light and fuel be deducted from the profits, it will be found that the gains are small. A merchant, who has pursued the retail dry goods traffic in this city for thirty years, has assured me, that he has not paid his expenses after seven in the evening.

In this calculation, moreover, we are not to forget the saving of

time. Who can tell of how much advantage it would be to the employer to gain every day three or four hours for rest, recreation, social, moral, and religious improvement, and for the exercise of the kindly feelings of the soul? How much must a man earn by night-trading, in order to compensate him for such a loss?

Again, I ask, Why must we plead in vain, when we ask that a ten or twelve hour law be enacted, by common consent and imperious custom, in behalf of tradesmen and their clerks? It is objected, that it would be hazardous to the morals of the clerks. I know full well that the morals of the young men in our city are exposed to great hazard, and that many yearly fall victims to the destroyer. But is that a reason for treating them worse than convicts or slaves? Why not, then, keep all at work,—apprentices and journeymen, as well as clerks? Are the latter less intelligent than the former?—possessed of less firmness, self-control, and self-respect? It is not to be admitted for a moment. If it is safe in the one case, it is in the other.

Or, is it to be supposed that this over-working will favorably affect their morals? Recreation they will have. You cannot prevent it. It is inhuman to deny it to them. Their nature demands it. If you keep them employed until the hours for social visiting are past, and halls of instruction are closed, you drive them to the saloons, refectories, porter-houses, and houses of ill-fame, with which our city abounds. You create the very evil which you profess to guard against. All this I have seen, and affirm from abun-

dant observation.

But treat them as other young men are treated; work them no longer than others are worked; give them the evening, after the toils of the day are past, and I will answer for them. They will abundantly repay your kindness-nay, your sense and exercise of justice. Many of them have families of their own, as well as yourselves, and will gladly be welcomed at home, where, in the exercise of the social affections, they will be all the better fitted to serve you on the morrow. Others are of that period of life when the heart naturally turns to the softer sex, in search of a companion for life. Now you compel them to occupy the Sabbath, or a part of it, in the needful endeavor to become thoroughly acquainted with the object towards whom they have turned their desires. Let them have their evenings, and they will seek admittance to the society of respectable females, than which there can scarcely be a greater safeguard to virtue. It is, next to divine grace in the heart, the best of all safeguards. Let them be admitted to the confidence and affection of virtuous, refined, and high-minded females, and they will strive to deserve it. They will not-they cannot, come reeking from the stews into such a presence. They will scorn it.

Opportunities will also be given, and embraced, for mental improvement. "The child is father of the man." The clerk is to be the merchant. It is of great importance that the merchant be in-

telligent, well trained, for the responsibilities of business and of public life, and accurately informed in all that pertains to a good education. It is demanded by the reputation of our mercantile But many of our clerks are obliged to seek employment at an early life, and before they have had the thorough discipline of education. If ignorant, they must continue so, according to the present mode of doing business. Give them the same opportunities that are enjoyed by the apprentice and the craftsman. and they need not remain in ignorance. Let them have the evening of every day, and you give them an impulse to improve themselves. They may then frequent, and with profit, the Mercantile Library, established for their special benefit; the vast and valuable stores of which the retail clerks can now enjoy scarcely at all, unless they give the sacred Sabbath to reading. Lectures and evening-schools may then be visited; and other opportunities for storing the mind with useful knowledge be embraced. Why should

these privileges be denied them?

Last of all, let me plead with you to remember that the getting of gain, so far from being the great object for which we come into this world, and with which we should occupy ourselves here, is one of the smallest. When we make it the chief thing, the one only thing, as so many do, we sin against our own souls; we prefer the less to the greater, and suffer ourselves to be made the slaves of Mammon. It is enough, surely, to be thus occupied by day. remainder of our wakeful hours are needed for higher, better pur-We are not to forget that we are candidates for eternity, and that we have need to be daily engaged in preparation, in laying up treasures for heaven. The Christian may be greatly profited by the social devotional meetings of the evening. Our churches can scarcely thrive in spiritual matters without them. the retail merchant and his clerks must be, for the most part, denied the profit and the pleasure of such means of grace; while our churches must be deprived of the attendance of a large portion of their brethren, because the business of the world must be extended into the night.

Let the desired reform be put into practice, and we shall have healthier, more vigorous, and more intelligent merchants, happier homes, more sociability, more refinement, and more opportunity for every species of mental, moral, and religious improvement. None will be impoverished,—all enriched by the change. None

will be losers,—all gainers. Shall the reform be carried?

We put the question, not to the merchants alone, and shop-keepers, but to their customers. Just as soon as night-traffic ceases to be lucrative, it will be given up. The merchant will not keep open his store, merely to illumine the streets, nor to preserve the morals of his clerks. His public spirit and his philanthropy are not so fully developed. Whenever it costs him more to keep his clerks employed by night, than he makes by their labor, he will

close before night. Such a result may soon be brought about. Let the community resolve to abandon evening shopping altogether, and the shops and stores will all be closed. In the name of humanity, then, I call upon you to pledge yourselves to a Total Abstinence from Evening Shopping. Buy all that you want by day. Have pity upon the poor prisoner behind the counter. Compel him not to wait and tend until nine and ten at night. Treat him not worse than you would the man that digs, or paves, or sweeps the streets, or carries the hod. Make him not a slave. Give him time to breathe the healthful air, to taste the sweets of domestic life, to improve his mind, to polish his manners, to enjoy the means of grace. Let him go free at night-fall.

May the time soon come when it shall be written over the door of every factory, shop, and store, and on every heart, "The night

cometh, when no man can work."

#### XII.

### FAITH, GENUINE AND SPURIOUS.

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"Faith without works is dead."-JAMES ii. 20.

The great religious question with us is, "How shall man be just with God?" To this question different answers have been given. Some have gone to one extreme, holding that mere faith is sufficient, and that works of righteousness are not at all necessary to our acceptance with God, or to our enjoyment of his favor. Others have gone to the opposite extreme, holding that faith is not necessary at all, and that a correct life and a good moral character will insure any man's salvation. And even those who have avoided both these errors, have sometimes had but a confused idea of the real connection between faith and works.

There are two great principles on this subject set forth in Scripture. One is, "that a man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law"—that he cannot obtain salvation as a reward, or in payment for his righteous deeds, but by faith in Christ. The other is, that faith does not "make void the law"—does not take away the necessity of righteousness; that the faith required in the Gospel, cannot exist without producing real holiness of life. A very slight examination will show that the two are not inconsistent with each other—that confidence in the revealed mercy of God, may well harmonize with love to him, and with obedience to his law.

I propose to consider the second of these principles, as it is presented in the text:

FAITH, WITHOUT WORKS, IS DEAD.

1. Because mere speculation is not the appropriate business of man. A habit of mere speculation is possible. Man is capable of looking at truth abstractedly, or without any regard to its practical bearings. He may accustom himself to view the truths of science, or philosophy, or morals, or religion, simply for the gratification of his curiosity, or the exercise of his mind, like the general propositions of mathematics, which may be demonstrated and admired as

true, without any thought of applying them to practice, or without once asking whether there be any realities to which they corres. pond. And such speculations are very fascinating to many minds. and to some almost irresistible. There is a great deal of pleasure in these day-dreams of the intellect; in building palaces of clouds. beautiful to look at, harmonious in their proportions, fitly joined together and compacted in all their parts, but designed for no practical use. Much skill, and mental power, and taste, may be expended on them, and in such employment a man may wish to pass his life. And yet they are altogether out of place in a world like This is a world of realities, of things that are practicalnot of cloud-castles and day-dreams. Every man has a thousand interests that always demand his care; all the energies of his mind should be brought to bear upon practical things. He has no time and no strength to waste upon mere speculation—it is not his proper business here. The life of man is too short; he has none too much time for the practical affairs of life; he may fill up every hour with duty, and he ought. The flying moments are too few, and too precious, to be given to idle dreams, or employed in doing that which looks forward to no practical results. If man had nothing to do in the world—no appointed work, no appropriate business, no wants to supply, no interests to take care of, nothing to hope for, nothing to fear, no relations nor duties to his fellow-men, who might be affected by his conduct: if he had to choose perfect idleness, utter vacuity and emptiness of mind, or speculations upon abstract truth-then, of course, it were better he should do this, than do nothing, and such speculations would be his appropriate work. But he is reduced to no such alternative. He can find enough to do. He is not placed in a castle of indolence, or a paradise of ease; his wants will not take care of themselves; his desires will not be gratified without any effort of his own. Life is a mazy path, beset with dangers; and the dangers will not, of their own accord, keep out of his way, Mere speculation upon abstract truth, however correct, however beautiful it may be, will not keep him from starvation; it will not bring him the comforts of life; it will not guide him through its snares; it will not shield him from its ills. Nor will it discharge his duty to others: it will not feed the hungry; it will not comfort them that are bowed down; it will not bind up the This is a world in ruins; a world full of misery and tears; and the relief of its sorrows affords full employment for the noblest intellect, and for the most enthusiastic feelings of good-will to man: but mere speculation will not wipe away a single tear, nor take off a single burden from the weary and the heavy-laden of earth. In its best estate it reaches no higher than that benevolence which says to them that are naked, and destitute of daily food, "Depart in peace; be ye warmed and filled"—but gives them not those things which they need.

It is so in religion. Mere speculation will not ease the soul. A

faith which looks at religious truth as an abstraction, and-makes it subservient to no practical uses, is dead. It fails of doing its appropriate work: it was not made simply to exist, clear, it may be, and beautiful, as an icicle—and as useless. It is contrary to all the analogy of God's government, contrary to the first principles and the very idea of religion. Man as a religious being has something else to do than merely to speculate on truth, or merely to believe it without making its influence the moving power of his life. "Faith without works is dead"—dead to all the appropriate business of life—dead to all useful purposes; to all the ends for which we are placed on earth, and which we ought to fulfil. On all subjects, the theory and the practice of truth are united; they are made to go hand in hand; and what God hath joined together, man has no right to put asunder.

Man as a religious being has wants to supply: he is at enmity with God, and he needs peace; his heart is defiled with sin, and he needs a cleansing and sanctifying power; he has gone astray, and his erring feet need to be guided into the path of life; he is lost, and he needs salvation. And what shall it profit him to have the most correct views of God's plan of mercy; to see, as clearly as angels do, his ruin and his remedy—if he practically keeps aloof from that mercy, and will not apply that remedy to himself? What shall it avail him that he knows every step in the path of life, while he still walks in the road that leads to death? What propriety is there in his idle faith—in his fruitless speculations on religious truth—while his soul is trembling between heaven and hell? "Thou believest there is one God: thou doest well: the devils also believe and tremble." Their faith is doubtless correct enough; but it is worthless: it does not work by love: it produces no fruits of holiness there: and it is at least quite as much out of place, and quite as worthless, on A dying man, hastening to eternal retributions, has something else to do: his proper work is to secure the salvation of his soul; and until he has done this, all his speculations are of no avail; they may be correct and magnificent, but they are correct and magnificent trifles: and though he have all knowledge, and believe all mysteries, it will profit him not at all. His faith is out of place: it belongs to the tomb—to the dwelling of things that return to the dust-it is dead.

2. Faith without works is dead, because the very design of re-

quiring faith is that it may produce good works.

There are but two uses to which truth can be put; two ends it is capable of answering—to be looked at, and to produce a practical effect. There is, doubtless, pleasure in admiring truth—as there is in admiring a painting or a landscape. Truth is the mind's landscape: whose glories it may search out, whose sunshine may make it glad, and in whose beauties it may rejoice.

The earth is full of the glory of Jehovah; the eye is never wea-

ried with beholding his wondrous works. When it was first revealed to the inhabitants of heaven, the morning stars sang together. and all the sons of God shouted for joy. And doubtless angels, to this day, find pleasure in admiring this exhibition of his wisdom and power. And yet the world was made for some other end than merely to be admired. And truth also exists for some other purpose than merely to be admired; and unless it accomplishes something else, it might as well not be at all. There is much that is beautiful, much that is sublime, in the truths of science and philosophy: but their highest value does not lie in this, but in the practical effects they can be made to produce, and the uses to which they can be put. We might spare the beauty for the sake of the utility, but we could not spare the utility for the sake of the beauty. shadows may be tinged with many a rainbow color, and may glitter gorgeously in the sun; but if there be no substance, what can they do? what are they worth in a world of realities?

Now it is not to be supposed that God has revealed to us the truths of the Gospel merely that we might look at them, and admire, and say, "How wonderful." The supposition is not in accordance with his character or his mode of dealing with us. There is nothing in his character from which we may suppose that he does anything for mere display. He did not make the world merely to show his creatures what he could do. He is not worshipped as though he needed anything: he dwells in light unapproachable; his happiness is perfect; it is not dependent on the homage of his creatures: it will not be diminished if they fail to admire his works-what need then had he to display his power? And in all the history of his ways, where is the record of anything that God has done for no other purpose than to call forth admiration? Neither has he made known truth to us simply that we might admire his wisdom, and wonder at the extent of his knowl-The truths that we gather from his works, the truths that are thickly strewn in all places of his dominions, the truths that his Providence everywhere proclaims,—are all revealed, not for display, but for some useful end: and if the truth of the Gospel be an exception, it is the only exception in the universe, and the strangest. would seem that if any truth is revealed for useful purposes, it must be this-truth which relates to the things of eternity, to interests whose importance eternity alone will enable us fully to understand; truth which concerns the life and death of the soul; truth which is so eminently practical in its appearance; which is capable of producing such great effects; so mighty to the pulling down of strong holds; which can burst asunder the iron chains of habit, and unloose those who were fast bound in sin; truth which is quick and powerful, and sharper than a two-edged sword; truth which God himself has likened to a fire, and to a hammer that breaketh the flinty rock in pieces: it cannot be that this truth was revealed merely to be admired.

There is but one other supposition: that religious truth is revealed. and our faith in it required, that it may produce its appropriate practical effects—that, as we are required to love our neighbor as ourselves, not that we may say in his necessities, "Be thou warmed and filled," and give him nothing; but that we may do the works of benevolence; so we are required to exercise faith in the Gospel, that we may do the works and show the effects of faith. effects of faith, the legitimate operations of sacred truth, are, holy affections in the heart, and a life of obedience to the commands of God. God does not ask men to believe the Gospel and go on in sin. He has not set forth Christ and his cross as the objects of our faith, that we should believe and wonder and despise; but that our faith should work by love. "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness." "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid! yea, we establish the law." We are not to go on in sin because we have believed in the abounding grace of God: the object of our faith is to make us dead unto sin, and "how shall we, who are dead unto sin, live any longer therein?" Its object is to make us the servants of God, and how shall we still consecrate ourselves to the service of sin? The "end of our faith" is "the salvation of our souls"—but it is a holy salvation—a deliverance from the power of evil-a purification of the unclean heart-a new creation, after God, in righteousness and true holiness. "This is Who is he the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus Christ is the Son of God?" It is the very design of our faith, that it may deliver us from the enticements of the world, and cast off its chains; that our affections, no longer bound to earth, may rise, and rest upon God, and upon things in heaven. God requires of us faith, that we may be purified by it; that we may be fitted to dwell in heaven, and be made like those holy spirits that worship before his He requires of us faith, that we may make known on earth the riches of his grace; that we may tell from our own experience the constraining power of his love; that we may be living examples of the power of godliness; that our light may so shine before men, that they shall see our good works, and glorify God. He does not ask us to believe that we may be idle, and hang as dead weights upon the church; but that we may be careful to maintain good Practical righteousness, entire consecration, "holiness to the Lord," are the appropriate effects of the Christian's faith, and the very effects it was designed to produce. Of course, then, if our faith does not produce these effects, if it does not lead us to these works, it is worthless-it is dead. It will not restore the sick man to health, to have admired the remedy, if he has not used it: and it will not save the soul, to have admired the plan of salvation, to have believed it in all its features, while its conditions were not performed. And it will be no sufficient answer to the questions of the judgment-day, that we have never doubted the truth of the Gospel, or that we have thought it a glorious Gospel, and wondered at its beauties and its mighty power. The very design for which God requires our faith is, that it may make us holy, that it may produce good works; and unless it does this, it cannot save us. We shall learn at the last day, if we have not learned before, that faith without works is dead—dead, because it fails of answering its design—dead, because it does nothing—because it is useless—because it gives no signs of life.

3. Faith without works is dead, because the practice of the precepts of the Gospel is necessary, to keep alive our faith in it.

Truth disregarded, soon vanishes from the mind: principles not carried out, motives not acted upon, are as though they were not. The mind is not so made that it will hold fast to truths that produce no effect upon it, that do not influence a man's conduct, nor become incorporated with his life. There is nothing to keep such truths in the mind; there is no reason why they should remain: and they will pass away—our faith in them will die of indolence and neglect. If, therefore, we would have these truths vividly present before us; if we would keep alive our faith in them; we must act them out; our conduct must be consistent with our faith; we must live as though we really believed them.

Faith is not self-existent. It does not follow, because it once existed, that it still is. A man has no real, living belief in truths that have long since vanished from the mind, which have left no apparent trace, and which memory never recalls. He may have had a faith—but it is no more—it is dead, It is so with the Gospel. Whatsoever faith we have in it must be kept alive by exercise: its objects must be kept before the mind by obeying the precepts which the Gospel gives. The theory and the practice must go together, or

both will cease to exist.

Besides, the truths of the Gospel are of a spiritual nature; they relate to spiritual things; they cannot be fully understood until they become a part of our own experience. Who can understand what is meant by the law of God dwelling in the heart—the peace of God that passeth all understanding-the fellowship with the Father, and with his Son, Jesus Christ—the witness of the Spirit—the joy that is unspeakable and full of glory? They are unmeaning sounds to the world-who can understand them, till he knows them from his own experience? And how shall a man have faith in that which he does not know? And how shall he know the things of the Gospel, unless he obeys its commands? "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine." It is not enough that we have once assented to the truths of the Gospel-unless we have acted upon them, that faith was dead long ago. These truths cannot be to us living realities unless they regulate our lives. Faith without works is an absurdity. Faith in the Gospel is faith in something that requires holiness; that denounces woe upon transgressors; that declares there is no peace to the wicked; that tells us, without holiness no man shall see the Lord. Now, if a man lives without regarding these declarations, if he neglects the works of holiness, has he faith? does he believe these things? Is it possible for what he calls his faith to live, while it is thus contradicted by all his conduct? is it not properly declared to be dead? It is dead because it has none of the power and the activity of life; because without exercise it cannot live; nor without practical obedience to those precepts which it pretends to hold.

4. Faith without works is dead, because it is the faith of a dead neart.

The heart which is unmoved by the objects of Christian faith, is properly called dead. There are no objects in the universe that have so much moral power; that are so well suited to kindle the soul with enthusiasm, and awaken every energy of the mind. They appeal to every high principle, to every noble sentiment, to every generous feeling, to all the susceptibilities of the heart. They place before us the brightest visions of hope: they unveil the scenes of heaven, and invite us to dwell in light and glory there. They tell of the dark regions of despair, and the fierceness of the wrath of God—and they call upon us to escape. They surround us, they press upon us, with motives to holiness of infinite value-motives beyond those which angels feel. Angels have seen the excellence of God; they have known his goodness, and they can feel its power: but they have never known his compassion towards them as sinners; they have never tasted his pardoning grace; the scene on Calvary was not for their personal advantage; precious blood has not been shed for them; the appeals of a dying Saviour were not addressed to them; the motives that cluster around the cross were not placed before them. These mighty influences are brought to bear only upon the lost of the human race:-and is not that man's heart dead which does not feel their constraining power? is not all spiritual life absent? is not all cold, lifeless, repulsive as the

The eyes of the dead may be fixed in ghastly stare upon the glories of creation; the ears of the dead may be surrounded with all the exciting sounds of life—but no life is aroused, no action is called forth. So it is with that heart and that faith which can behold unmoved the objects which the Gospel reveals: the eyes may be open, but the glorious truths that pass before them kindle no emotions of hope, excite no pulsations of love in the heart, call forth no signs of spiritual activity—because it is the gaze of death. What claims to life has the heart that can behold the cross of Christ, and not be melted into tears, and penitence, and love? What claims to life has the faith which can look upon the unfathomed depths of God's mercy, which can estimate the sufferings of Christ, and count the value of his precious blood—and then produce no

works of gratitude and holiness? How much better is it than the faith of him who sleeps in the tomb? Is not that heart which beholds the Gospel and the way of life unmoved—is not the faith which views them with cool indifference, properly called dead?

We learn from this subject,

1. The real nature of the faith required in the Gospel. It is not a mere speculation; not a mere intellectual perception of the truth; not a mere admiration for the harmonies, the glories, and the beautiful relations of truth; not an inefficient, a cold, a lifeless belief—but a faith that works by love; a faith that shall be a living, active principle in the soul—helping it to burst the bonds of sin—cleansing it of all that is unholy—urging it on to deeds of righteousness. God asks for no other faith—no other will save the soul. He values no faith that is consistent with an unholy life, or which produces no sanctifying effects upon the heart. It is a mockery, and an insult to his grace.

2. We may learn the nature of the connection between faith and works. There is a real connection. Neither can exist alone. Their life is one; and if one dies, the other cannot live. Good works are the fruit and the legitimate effect of faith; and any such faith as God requires—any faith which is not worthless, which is not dead—must produce them of necessity, and in its own nature.

They are the only evidence of the existence of faith. What proof is there of life, if there be none of the movements, the breathings, the actions of life? If the question be, whether a body is living, we ask: Does it breathe? Does it move? Does the lifeblood hasten through its channels? If not, where is the evidence of its life? So, if the inquiry concerns the existence of faith, we ask: Does it move? Has it the warm pulsations of life? Does it produce any of the actions of life? If not, it is dead. There can be no proofs of its existence, if there be no works of holiness.

3. We learn that there is a great amount of dead faith in the church. There is much that is fruitless—much that is without works—much that has no good influence upon its possessors or upon the world—much that is worthless—much that will not endure the tests of the judgment-day—much that will perish when "the

fire shall try every man's work, of what sort it is."

Is it not then wise in us, my Christian friends, to anticipate the searching inquiries of the last day—to ask ourselves now concerning the reality of our faith? Does it work by love? Does it lead us to be active in serving God? Does it make us love and imitate Jesus, the Author and Finisher of faith? Let us put these questions now to our own hearts—lest we learn too late that our faith has no saving power, and read our doom in the declaration, "Faith without works is dead."

#### XIII.

### THE TERMS OF SALVATION.

### BY REV. PHARCELLUS CHURCH, D.D.,

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"If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."—Rom. x. 9.

Varied and complicated as God's revelation may appear, extended as are the periods over which its records are spread, minute and bare of thought as its genealogical details may seem, and uninteresting and unintelligible as many parts of the book may be in matter and style; yet all that is essential to salvation is compressed within limits astonishingly narrow, and expressed in terms surprisingly clear. There is a focal point to which all its rays converge, which the blindest eye might see, and the darkest mind confess the intensity of its illumination.

This was true even of the law of Moses—the epitome of the whole was contained in ten short precepts, and the sum and substance of these were so fully included in the one exercise of love to God and man, that the whole law is said to be fulfilled by love. Hence, Moses said to his nation, "The word is nigh thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it." Thus, they could

not plead ignorance in justification of their disobedience.

The Apostle accommodates the same words to the gospel terms of salvation. God does not require impossibilities of you, my unconverted friends. He is not a hard master, to mock your inability and insult your woes. He hath not complicated and mystified the conditions of your salvation, that you should find it difficult to comprehend and know them. The righteousness of faith does not encourage you in inquiring, "Who shall ascend into heaven to bring Christ down? nor, who shall descend into the deep, to bring him up again from the dead?" nor does it suggest anything impracticable or impossible; but it comes to tell you that the word, or the specific thing by which you may obtain salvation, is nigh you, in your mouth and in your heart, being the word of faith, the doctrine and duty of faith, preached in the gospel, "that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."

Here it is, my friends—believe, confess, and the infinite blessing of God's favor here, and life everlasting hereafter, will pour their full effulgence upon your souls. "This is the work of God, that

ye believe on him whom he hath sent."

The availableness of the gospel remedy to the most debilitated and hopeless, is its crowning excellence. In this respect it is like God's remedy for the dying Israelites in the wilderness, who had only to look to the brazen serpent and live. We have only to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and we shall be saved; to behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world, and then to follow up our faith with its appropriate modes of declaration or confession. If ordinances, and forms, and creeds, and a long course of outward amendments, were essential to salvation, what could the dying thief have done amid the agony and distraction of crucifixion, whose first prayer appears to have been reserved for the last hour of life? Who would dare to preach a gospel thus encumbered by conditions, thus unavailing in the extremest mo-

ments of agony and woe?

Glad should I be, my friends, to make the idea of believing clear to your minds. I am aware of the difficulty of doing it, partly on account of the much that has been said and written to confuse and darken your thinking on the subject, and partly from your liability to regard faith as simply the passive effect of evidence upon your reason, which you can no more make otherwise than you can alter the impression of light upon your eyes. How shall I disabuse your minds of this fatal deception, so as to make you feel, that believing in Jesus is simply yielding yourselves to all the legitimate tendencies of that pure and holy ideal and influence with which his name and truth are associated? Dark as your mind is, depraved and guilty as are your hearts and lives, the word is still within you, in the form of all those remonstrances against your sins, and all that solemn pleading with your reason and conscience in behalf of God and holiness, and all those fearful anticipations of a judgment to come, with which the truth of Christ is connected in your spiritual nature and history. I solemnly warn you against such an interpretation or use of the doctrine of depravity, as to assume or suppose that the word of Christ can have no response in your fallen Even devils feel it and tremble; and how much may you who are under the mediatorial reign be supposed to

# "Feel how awful goodness is!"

Forget not the affirmation of Paul in the connection of my text, that "the word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth and in thy heart; that is, the word of faith which we preach." Its powerful responses are within every human bosom who seriously attends to it, and you have only to repress what is contrary, and give yourselves up to its leading without reserve, to realize the blessed result of "believing with the heart unto righteousness."

Not to be too abstract, let me add, believing that God raised Christ from the dead, is taking hold of that fact as a reality, so that it is the same to us as those things which we hear, see, or know, and the same as if we had been present and witnessed the process of the resurrection, from the first pulsating struggle of life to resume its functions in the dead body of Jesus, till, disencumbered of his grave-clothes, he ascended from the stony confines of the sepulchre to the opening expanse of the dawning morning.

This event is the organ to our mind of two classes of truths—the visible and the invisible, the literal and the spiritual, the first of

which we may believe without believing the other.

The visible or literal facts of Christ's resurrection are those which are addressed to the outward senses. The resurrection of the dead body of Jesus from the tomb of Joseph, where on the eve of the crucifixion it had been deposited by his afflicted followers, is just as much a matter of outward history as Alexander's passage of the Granicus, or Cæsar's of the Rubicon. How touching was the scene! The nails were extracted from his hands and feet, and his body was lowered from the cross, on which it had just expired in the pains of an agonized death. Here it lies pale and cold, to assure the cruel soldiers that their work had already been so terribly effective, that the bones need not be broken to complete the process of dissolution. But one of them, to make assurance sure. perforates his side with his spear, when the transfixed heart discharged its sanguinary contents of blood and water. drop of that divine fountain is poured out on the altar of his love to man.

When the soldiers departed, his mother, through whose soul a sword had pierced, and his sorrowing disciples, gathered round his lifeless but still loved remains, with touching interest prepared them for the burial, and then bore them to Joseph's new tomb; whence, after performing sepulchral rites, they retired smitten with the horrors of the scene, and with hearts wrung with anguish at the dreadful reality, that their Lord was crucified and slain. They waited with trembling but unbelieving anxiety for the morning of the resurrection; and when they were early at the sepulchre and found that he had indeed risen, they believed not for joy and amazement. And nothing finally overcame their doubts, but repeated and familiar interviews with him after his resurrection. Thus gradually, thus certainly, thus demonstrably, this sealing fact of revealed religion, by which life and immortality were brought to light, was unfolded to the minds of men, and became a fixed fact in the history of the human race.

Their testimony, often repeated in words, but still more powerfully affirmed in the voluntary sacrifices of ease, reputation, and life, in proclaiming to the world Jesus and the resurrection, together with the establishment of Christianity and the infinite train

of results which have followed, conspire to settle the resurrection of Christ on an immutable basis of evidence.

Now, all these outward facts a person may take hold of by a firm faith, and yet he may not be saved. This faith is genuine as far as it goes, but it does not go far enough to grasp those peculiar truths and influences therein involved, which are the organs of salvation to the soul.

There is an *invisible* and *spiritual* class of facts herewith associated, which we must believe before we can be saved. And it is to the belief of these that the Apostle alludes in our text; such as that Christ was the Son of God, being thus declared with power. according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead; that the law which he illustrated by his life is holy, just, and good, and of universal obligation; that we are guilty in proportion to our dereliction from it, and hence that we are by nature in a ruined condition, without God and without hope in the world; that the object of Christ's life, death, and resurrection, was to save us from our sins; that his divine attributes, thus fully demonstrated by his resurrection, qualify him for the work; that he is to be our Judge as well as our Saviour, calling us from the grave, of which he was the first-fruits, that we may receive at his hands according to the deeds done in the body; and above all, that the ideal of virtue, goodness, holiness, thus present in Christ, is attainable; and that, by beholding him, we may be transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. It is true, these several points may not come before a convicted sinner in the form and order here stated; but if we analyze his feelings, we shall find them in fact present and operative in the process of his spiritual transformation.

The significance of any given document or event comes from its connecting facts and relations, more than from anything in itself. If a gifted mind had written, as an exercise in composition, precisely such a document as our Declaration of Independence, word for word, it might have been regarded as an evidence of talent, but it would have had nothing of the significance of that document in its actual relations to our nation and to mankind. As a declaration of rights on the part of a people struggling against oppression, who stood ready to maintain it with life, property, and sacred honor, it has acquired a position in the world of mind, and in the memory of posterity, to which the composition in itself could never have raised it. The same amount of blood and carnage might accrue from a mob as from the battle of Bunker Hill, and yet one would be reckoned a deed of infamy, as the other is of glory.

So, great as a dead man's resurrection is, in itself considered, it could have nothing of the peculiar interest of Christ's resurrection in it. He was raised up as God manifest in the flesh; as the long-promised Messiah; as a Lamb slain from the foundation of the world; as the brightness of the Father's glory and the express

image of his person, from whose character the radiations of Divinity are reflected to our view, that we may see them without being dazzled and overwhelmed with

"The darkness of light insufferable;"

as the High Priest of our profession, who, after making his soul an offering for sin, in fulfilment of the types of the previous dispensations, entered into heaven itself, there to appear on the right hand of God in our behalf; yea, he was raised up to be the Judge of the quick and the dead, and to give the assured hope, that though a man die, yet shall he live again; and thus, his resurrection becomes to us an organ of the highest facts, influences, and associations ever brought within the compass of the human intellect, the

keystone in the arch of redemption.

To believe this great fact in all its spiritual relations with the heart, is to believe it in the exercise of its appropriate affections and practices; yea, it is to surrender to its leading all the voluntary powers of our nature, so that Christ shall become to us the chief among ten thousand and altogether lovely. Let me give you an illustration: In looking over a marine list, we might, perhaps, notice the arrival of a hundred ships in the different ports of the world, and fully believe it, with little or no interest in the matter. But let one of us be the father of a son at sea, from whom he had not heard for so long a time that he had given him up as lost, see the arrival of the ship in which he sailed announced, and do you not think he would feel interested? All the feelings of the father gush up, and he believes with his heart. His faith in that arrival is no stronger than in any other, but his heart has much more to do with it.

So when sinners believe in the spiritual connections of Christ's resurrection, how powerfully are their feelings awakened! It becomes now a matter of inward experience that Christ has died for their sins, and rose again for their justification. Their conscience apprehends the holiness, faithfulness, and truth which shine in the person of Jesus, as the pattern of what they themselves ought to be. And just in proportion as they see, from what Christ was, what they ought to be, they abhor themselves and repent in dust What contortions of conscience are sometimes awakened by this heart-believing? How did Jewish consciences writhe under its lacerations on the day of Pentecost! It is true, it is true, O God, that we have crucified the Lord of glory and hanged him on a tree. We are lost, we are lost. Men and brethren, what shall we do? . How shall we escape the wrath of God? Such were their feelings, and such will be ours when faith reveals the relation of our sins to Christ's death. It gives us a sense of wonderful nearness to God. We may not rejoice in that nearness, because of the guilty fears which it awakens, and we see not how we can escape the vengeance of the violated law. Those who really feel themselves guilty of the body and blood of the Lord, might even be willing that the rocks should fall upon them and the mountains cover them, yea, might hie them to the blackness of darkness forever, if by these means they could hide themselves from him that

sitteth upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb.

It is not till we advance a step beyond the holiness of God and his law shining in the person of his Son, that we come to take hold on the blood thus shed by our own hands, as the means of cancelling our guilt, as an all-sufficient atonement to render God just in justifying us, and to give us all joy and peace in believing. it is that we believe with a heart unto righteousness, or then it is, that by the power of the Spirit, we believe ourselves into the actual possession of heart holiness, and into that state of favor wherein we stand and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Then it is, that we are begotten to a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and eternal life begins its reign in our souls, so as to be a vital and most satisfactory experience, affiliating us to God, giving us the spirit of adoption—God our Father, heaven our home. Christ our Elder Brother, and the Spirit witnessing with our spirits that we are indeed born of God. Then it is, that we become new creatures-old things pass away and all things become new.

I must now insist upon confession, as a part of this process no less necessary than believing, beginning, progressing, ending with it, so that the latter is an impossibility without the former. Indeed, confession in our text is put first, because it is in most cases the antecedent of any controlling influence of faith over us-" That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." But in the next verse the order is reversed, and faith is put first: "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." It would thus appear that they are collateral exercises, going hand in hand till the soul enters into a justified state and into heavenly glory. confession, I conceive, includes any mode of declaring our acquaintance with Christ, as the original seems to indicate, or our sense of needing a Saviour up to the extent of our feeling it at the time, and it may specially refer to a profession of our faith by submitting to the ordinances which Christ has instituted for this purpose.

You have, my unconverted friends, some degree of sensibility to divine things, some impression of needing a Saviour, some anxiety in reference to a judgment to come, and you cannot deny that gospel truth has met with a degree of response from your own minds and hearts. Thus the word is nigh you, even in your mouth, and in your heart. But these inward impressions of the truth cannot control your minds nor produce saving faith, so long as they are repressed and concealed, and are not out-spoken in the ears of Christians and the audience of the world. Think of that solemn declaration of our Lord, "Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels."

How can a change from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, the greatest moral transition known to the universe, take place in your minds, without some form of confession or outward manifestation? Such is the connection between the inward and the outward, the thought and its tendencies to expression in words, in our natures, that the strong impulse of Christ's resurrection could not be felt within, without being manifested in word and deed. To repress and conceal, is to extinguish the light of the truth from our hearts. It was concealment in Nicodemus that rendered his piety for a time so undecided and unavailing. And not a few among us are kept in a similar condition from the How many are deeply impressed with the holiness of Christ, the justice of the divine law—who are deterred by pride, the fear of man, and various influences, from confessing what they feel, and the consequence is, like the seed that fell by the wayside, it is "caught away by the wicked one," and no good results en-Refusing to speak of your convictions is sure to repress them, strong as they may be, while the feeblest spark may be fanned to a flame by giving it vent and air. How true is it, that except a man deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Christ, he cannot be his disciple!

Those who think themselves secret believers, should respect the saving nature of their faith. A faith that has not sufficient strength to develop itself in confession, cannot be relied on as genuine or saving. To such, Jesus, because he knows all men, will not commit himself. He sees that their piety is without root or the power of endurance, like that of the stony ground hearers. Let all secret believers consider how necessary it is to become so openly, how false this cautious concealment is to a Saviour so precious and a cause so glorious, and how imperious is the obligation which they are under to go forth without the camp, bearing the reproach of

Christ.

God always presents some outward test of our inward feelings, and unless we abide it, our feelings cannot be right. Adam had his test in the prohibited tree; Nicodemus his in acknowledging his lowly Messiah before an unbelieving generation; the assembly on Mars hill theirs in cleaving to one so rude in speech as Paul, with Dionysius, Damaris, and others; and we have ours, perhaps, in reference to a meeting for inquiry, to private conversation with a minister or Christian on the interests of our souls, or in some other way. Who is able to meet these various modes of testing our inward feelings, and thus of confessing Christ before men, as often as occasion may require, up to the extent that our experience will justify? What we do not feel, we are not required to confess;

but why should we not boldly acknowledge all that God has done for our souls, whether it be little or much? Let us not despise the

day of small things.

The tendency of these confessions, whether in a free conversation on the state of our souls, or in submitting to the ordinances of religion, is to strengthen the principle of faith, and lead to a more decided influence of the gospel over our hearts and lives. Thus it is that we acquire power over temptation, strengthen and settle in us the principles of righteousness, and enter fully into the joy of God's great salvation. Think not that you are equal to the task of leading a Christian life, without these divinely appointed auxiliaries to your faith. Piety nourished in secret, has but a pale and sickly life, like plants in a dark cellar, which bloom without fruit and die without hope. It must have air, and light, and action, or how can it have increase or productiveness?

#### CONCLUSION.

1. The precise nature of the Spirit's work in our regeneration is herein revealed. It is that of unfolding the spiritual connections of Christ's resurrection. The word of the truth of the gospel states the outward, but the Spirit makes us see the inward facts and relations of this great subject. It is through his influence that the commandment comes, sin revives, and we die. He makes Christ's love in dying for us the means of begetting love in us, thus shedding it abroad in our hearts, and filling us with all joy and peace in believing. He witnesses with our spirits that we are born of God, by exciting in us the affections of the new birth. It is the

Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing.

2. Sinners must consider, however, that their voluntary co-operation is necessary throughout this process. The holiness and love of Christ, distinctly brought to our view, are adapted to raise in our minds a class of emotions which only require an appropriate action on our part to lead on to saving results. We can no more avoid being affected by them, when thus brought to our view, than we can avoid being touched by the story of the Roman daughter, whose father was condemned to death by starvation, and whom she kept alive in prison by means of the aliment which nature had provided for her new-born infant. The most undutiful children feel the beauty of this story, and if they were only to act on the impression, they would become more kind and respectful to their parents.

So, the worst of sinners cannot fail of being impressed with Christ's love in dying for sinful men, when they seriously contemplate the subject in the light of his resurrection, setting forth the greatness and glory of his character. Action on this impression in confessing their sins, is faith, and the more decisive and longer

continued this action is, the more controlling the influence of the faith becomes, till at length, through the accompanying agency of the Holy Spirit, they are renewed to obedience and begotten to a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. The work of the Spirit in the production of saving faith, essential as it is, is never effectual, without the voluntary co-operation of the sinner himself in some form of confession or manifestation.

3. Herein also we see the precise nature of unbelief. It is not simply the unconvinced reason withholding its assent from a lack of evidence, but it is a rebellion of the will against those decrees which the conscience gives forth under the promptings of the truth as it is in Jesus. Unbelief consists in resisting the impression of obligation to reform our lives, which the facts connected with Christ's resurrection make upon our minds, and hence it is the op-

posite of confession, it is a denial of Christ before men.

If the truth as it is in Jesus did not contain in itself a powerful call upon us to break off our sins by righteousness, how should our unbelief and resistance to it be esteemed so great a crime? How should this be singled out from all our other sins, as the reason of our being doomed to hell? If the word of Christ was not in the sinner, under the form of this powerful movement of conscience towards a new life, how should his resistance to it involve a guilt so black and a doom so fearful? Did not the sin of the Jews consist in opposing themselves to their inward sense of Christ's holiness and love, because his character did not accord in other respects to their worldly expectations from the Messiah? They sacrificed his holiness to their pride, his love to their ambition, and in this their sealing sin consisted.

Our faith, therefore, is the reverse of this process; it is following out all the tendencies of this holiness and love, and actively repressing and crucifying pride, ambition, avarice, and every contrary tendency. It is confessing Christ before men, coinciding and agreeing with Christ, and thus both faith and unbelief is a voluntary process throughout, never depending on the sufficiency or in-

sufficiency of evidence addressed to the reason.

Finally, sinners may see how impossible it is for them to occupy a neutral position in regard to Christ. Can conscience be neutral on a clearly stated question of right and wrong? Can the heart be neutral in reference to a matter involving the most serious consequences to our interest and our happiness? Do not the pleadings of conscience on the one hand, and of appetite on the other, the conflicts of reason and passion, of truth and error, of holiness and sin, within our own breast, create an imperious necessity of taking sides one way or the other? The outward may admit of neutrality, but not the inward, not the contrary tendencies and issues of our own spiritual nature, arising from the introduction of Christ's word into our minds. "He that is not with me is against me, and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad."

### XIV.

# THE PLACE AND IMPORTANCE OF AN INDIVIDUAL

### BY REV. ALBERT BARNES,

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"But now are they many members, yet but one body. And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee; nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you."—I Cor. xii. 20, 21.

My remarks on this occasion will have a single object. They will be designed to impress upon my hearers a sense of personal obligation in the cause of religion; the obligation resting on us as individuals. In doing this, I shall endeavor to ascertain the place and the importance of the individual in the social organization, and particularly in the church:—"There are many members, yet but one body. And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee; nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.' It will contribute to give order to the remarks which I propose to make, if I arrange them under the three following heads:—the erroneous views which prevail in regard to the place and the importance of the individual; the place which, according to the divine arrangements, he necessarily occupies in the social organization, and the place which he may voluntarily occupy in promoting the cause of religion.

I. First, the erroneous views which prevail in regard to the place and importance of the individual.

In regard to this, there are two quite opposite errors, though not equally bordering on virtue, or equally harmless.

1. The one which is most common, and the least virtuous, is that of over-estimating our importance, and consequently of being unwilling to occupy the place which we were designed to fill. It is unnecessary, I presume, to attempt to demonstrate the fact here adverted to, or to search out the causes of it. The error is the child of selfishness and pride; the effect of closing our eyes on the truth respecting ourselves; the result of always looking at one minute object, until it magnifies itself so as to occupy the whole field of vision. There are few persons who at some period of their lives are not seized with this overweening estimate of themselves;

there are many whom it accompanies all their lives, descending with them even to the mouth of the tomb. We think of our own consequence; our talents; our attainments. We think what a breach will be made when we die. We think of the mourners who will gather around us with broken hearts. We think of the solemn, sad procession that will go with us to the tomb:—forgetting how seldom it is that the hearts of any considerable proportion in a funeral procession are serious and solemn at all, or care anything about the dead. We look at our own affairs and press them forward, as if everything else should give way to them, and as if the world had no interests so great that they may not be required to yield to our convenience.

Now, how contrary all this is to truth and reality, it is hardly necessary to attempt to show. Few will care about it at all when we die; and the world at large will care nothing, and know nothing about it. A very little circle of friends will be affected—as a little circle of water is agitated when a drop of rain falls into the ocean. At the centre of that small circle of friends, there will be some deep emotion, and some tears of genuine grief will be shed; at a very little distance, the emotion will be fainter and feebler; at a point but a little more remote there will be none, and soon, very soon, all the agitation there was will have died away—as when the little

drops of rain fall into the ocean-

The gay will laugh
When thou art gone, the solemn brood of care
Plod on, and each one as before will share
His favorite phantom.—Bayant.

A few friends will go and bury us; and then they will turn away to their own concerns, forgetful that we are sleeping in the grave. Affection will rear a stone, and plant a few flowers over our grave -but the hand that reared the stone or planted the flowers will soon become unable to cut the letters deeper as they become obliterated, or to cultivate the flowers-and in a brief period the little hillock will be smoothed down, and the stone will fall, and neither friend nor stranger will be concerned to ask which one of the forgotten millions of the earth was buried there. No "old Mortality" will go to cut again those effaced words which told our name, and the time of our birth and of our death. Every vestige that we ever lived upon the earth will have vanished away. All the little memorials of our remembrance—the lock of hair enchased in gold, or the portrait that hung in our dwellings, will cease to have the slightest value to any living being, nor will even momentary curiosity be excited to know who wore that hair, or whose countenance is delineated there.

On my grassy grave
The men of future times will careless tread,
And read my name upon the sculptured stone;
Nor will the sound familiar to their ears,
Recall my vanished memory.—H. Kieke White.

2. The other error is the opposite one-more rare but more virtuous, and more nearly bordering on truth—that of undervaluing our importance as individuals. In melancholy mood we look at the facts just adverted to. We think of the hundreds of millions that dwell on the earth, each one just as important in his own sphere as we are, and ask ourselves how many there are of these that we know, or care about; and then, by a natural transition. we ask pensively, how many of them know us, or care anything We remember what countless hosts have lived, and played their parts, and are forgotten; and then we seize the glass of the astronomer and look out on other worlds and systems-when the imagination is lost in their immensity and their distance, and fancy them all peopled with as dense a population as our own, and come back with the impressive truth that all our earth compared with these worlds is literally less in proportion than a single grain of sand to all the sands which are spread along the shores of oceans. and with no mock modesty we ask, what are we? Of what importance are we amidst these multitudes; these worlds? What interests would suffer if we should be overlooked; who would weep if we should be forgotten forever? "What is man that Thou-the Maker of these worlds-art mindful of him?" Who, in these worlds, would know it if I should cease to be?

Looking out, then, on these opposite errors, it is of importance to understand our *real* place in the system of things where our Maker has placed us; the real work which is given us to do; the real

bearing of what we do on the organization around us.

II. My second object, therefore, was to consider the place which the individual *necessarily* occupies in the social organization. Perhaps we shall find something, not inconsistent with the exercise of humility and modesty, which will inform our minds with a con-

viction of his importance.

We have an illustration of what I mean in the text, and in the other verses relating to the same subject, in the chapter from which the text is taken. The body is made up of many members or parts, each one of which in its place is necessary to the harmony and happiness of the whole, and no one of which can be spared without injury. "The eye cannot undertake to do the whole work allotted to the animal frame, and say to the hand, I have no need of thee; the head cannot undertake the entire functions, and say to the feet, I have no need of you." It may be indeed a question, which is the most valuable or useful, and which could be spared with the least disadvantage; but no member, however unimportant, is lost without our being made sensible, if we were never before, of its value. It is saying only what will occur to any one to remark, that the whole body is made up of all the individual members; that a nation is but the aggregate of individual citizens; that an army is made up of individual soldiers; that the "milky-way" in the heavens is made up of individual stars; that the ocean is an accumulation of individual drops of water. Any one in itself may seem unimportant; and yet its value is to be estimated, not wholly or mainly by taking it out, and looking at it separately, and asking whether it would be missed by being withdrawn, but by the effect produced by all embraced—as we judge of the beauty and value of the eye, not by taking it out of its socket and placing it in a casket of gold, but where God has placed it in combination with the other members

of the body.

The real importance of the individual is to be estimated by the greatness of the results of all in combination, and the place to measure his value is when we are measuring those combined and aggregate results. To see the real worth of the soldier, all look not at one private in the army, and ask what difference in such a host it would make if he were killed or should run away; but we look at the results of such a victory as that at Waterloo—the effect on kingdoms, and on the course of the world perhaps for ages, and divide that result by the numbers engaged, and make that the point where we estimate his value. To see the importance of the individual laborer in the coral reefs, we do not select one of the countless millions of the little workers, and place him beneath the microscope, but we look at the land that begins to lift its head above the floods, or the groups of islands that form the habitations of men; and, standing there, we form our estimate of the value of the individual laborers that have long since ceased their toils, and that

never seemed to be worthy of notice.

It has cost many experiments, and has been the fruit of long study, to know the true worth and place of the individual in the world. At one time, he has seemed to be so unimportant, and there seemed to be such evils from his being associated with others, that it has been held to be the height of virtue to sever all connection with the living, and to carry out the idea of individuality and isolation, to the utmost possible extent. Antony in Egypt, and Benedict in Italy, types of this class of men, and fathers of the great and disastrous experiment, believed that virtue consisted in cutting the cords which bound them to the living world, and in separating themselves from the race. They withdrew to caves and solitude, and made it a virtue not to look on the face of man, and to take no part in the good or the evil of the world; in its social virtue, toils, sufferings, joys. There was to be no family for them; no church; no clan; no tribe; no country; nothing which was to bind them to any of the living. The idea of *individuality* was to be carried out to the utmost possible extent, without anything of alliance or combination; and the single virtue to be cherished was to be that, which we now deem to be the excuse of the most severe and solitary punishment of felons—solitariness. The whole monastic system, so fruitful of mischief everywhere, grew out of that conception; and all its inexpressible vices and follies have been the result of ignorance of the proper place of the individual in the organization where God placed him. Gloomy and ascetic spirits there are in all ages; misanthropic, and disappointed, and disturbed minds; the dissocial, and the proud, and the indolent, and the soured, to whom the cell of the monk is the appropriate home; and it shows some knowledge of human nature, and gives some popularity and power to a system of religion, to open caves in the desert for such minds as that of Antony, or to build monasteries like those on Sinai and Lebanon, for the soured and the disappointed;—or, which is the same thing, to establish a nunnery to which the disappointed, and the superstitious, of the gentler sex may retire, where they may close all communication with a hated world; and where, before physical death has done its work, the body and the soul may be entombed. All this is because the true place of the individual was not known.

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An opposite but equally dangerous thing is to combine individuals in unnatural and unholy alliances; in secret associations for evil, or public confederations of iniquity. Here the power of the individual is required; but he is allied with others for purposes which nature never contemplated, and where the organization must sooner or later infringe on some law of society. Here too man, dissatisfied with his Maker's arrangements, is always making experiments—as wide of the truth, and as disastrous in the end, as the scheme of the hermit, or the rules of the monastery. Now at New Harmony; now at Nauvoo; now at Niskeguna and Lebanon; and now in the encampments of the Fourierites, the experiment is made over and over again, to see whether the individual cannot be disposed of in some better association than the Creator has designed, and whether some new organization may not be made up that shall be in morals what was sought in the laboratory of the alchymist—to find out some new combinations that should produce the

elixir of life or the philosopher's stone.

God has grouped individuals in their natural relations as he thought best. He has left us free to form new combinations, if these natural groupings are not rudely sundered-but not otherwise; and he frowns on all combinations where they are not observed. If those natural groupings are not regarded; if the new disposing of the individual does not contemplate and recognize them, the new, arrangement falls to pieces. The natural grouping of the parts of the human race, as God has arranged them, is into families; neighborhoods; tribes; nations. He might have peopled the world with independent individuals—bound together by no common sympathies, cheered by no common joys, impelled to effort by no common wants. All that is tender in parental and filial affection; all that is mild, bland, purifying in mutual love; all that is elevating in sympathetic sorrow and joy; all that is great and ennobling in the love of the species, might have been unknown. Isolated individuals, though surrounded by thousands, there might have been no cord to bind us to the living world, and we should have wept alone, rejoiced alone, died alone. The sun might have shed his beams on us in our solitary rambles, and not a mortal have felt an interest in our bliss or woe. Each melancholy individual might have lived, as the hermit seeks to live, unbenefited by the existence of any other, and with no one to shed a tear on the bed of moss, when in despair he would lie down, and when he would die.

But this is not the way in which God has made the world. He has made the race one great brotherhood; and each one has some interest in the wildest barbarian that seeks a shelter beneath the rock, or that finds a home in a cave. This great common brotherhood he has broken up into communities of nations, tribes, clans, families—each with its own set of sympathies, with peculiar inter-

ests, with peculiar sorrows and joys.

In these organizations the individual is never overlooked or forgotten. He is an essential part, and there is not a feeling or law of his nature which is not consulted or regarded. He can play his individual part in his place; act out his nature; develop his talents; and you can form any new combination for good in entire consistency with these laws. The individual is never lost sight of, and yet his power is greatly increased by the combination. The father is an individual, and yet it is never lost sight of that he is a father, and not a man occupying a place which any other man might occupy; the mother is an individual, and yet she is recognized as a mother, and not merely a woman whose place could be as well filled by another; the brother, the sister, the child, the neighbor, the patriarch, the patriot, is an individual, and fills his place as such, and yet no small part of the influence which he wields grows out of the place which he occupies.

See now, for one moment, what may be done in accordance with these laws, or what may grow out of these laws for the good of

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There is, first, the widest play for individual genius and talent. The name of each one of the workmen of St. Peter's, as well as the name of Michael Angelo, might have been preserved; the labor of each stone-cutter, and carver, and gilder was needful; and the glory of the whole is the result of the combined skill of all. fame of Newton is his own, and ever will be; but the world shares the glory and the benefit of the principle. The genius of Milton as an individual had ample play, and his fame is his own; though the happiness of millions has been promoted by the Paradise Lost. was a toiling individual that wrought all this. So all that there is in our literature, and arts, and sciences, is the result of the labor of individuals—individuals not exactly like the builders of the honey-comb, or the coral reefs, that are produced by unvarying and unconscious instinct; individuals not like the builders of the pyramids, or the soldiers in a disciplined army—positions which nature never contemplated, where there is little more of genius, or freedom, or independent thinking than there is in the labor of the bee or the beaver: but individuals exulting in the consciousness of freedom; indulging in their own plans, and fired with their own aspirations; fettered by no improper restraints; walking in the light which their own genius has kindled, and yet in their freedom contributing to all

that is noble, and grand, and progressive in society.

There is, secondly, in accordance with these laws, and under these arrangements, the utmost made that is possible of the labors of the individual. He accomplishes most, and works to best advantage, when he is in his own sphere as God has placed and designed him. In the days of Nehemiah, when they built the walls of the city, the work went on and was completed, because every one "repaired over against his own house," and "over against his chamber," Neh. iii. 28, 30. In an army, the battle is secured not by fighting in disorder, or by forming new combinations, at the pleasure of the soldiers, but because each man contends in his appropriate place. The result, whatever glory there may be, is always the effect of the labors of individuals in their own places, and according to the measure of their talents and skill. Look over our country. It is studded over with cities, and towns, and villages, and smiling fields of harvest. It is penetrated with turnpikes, and railroads, and Its lakes and rivers are covered with steamboats, and with the evidences of an extended commerce. Its great rivers are crossed on bridges; their falls are ascended by locks; their obstructed channels are cleared out; their shallow places are deepened. The sound of the loom and the mill is everywhere heard in the land. Once all this was an unbroken forest; no cities or towns were here; there were no railroads, bridges, or canals; no vessel, save the bark canoe, had ever pressed the bosoms of these lakes and streams. What we see now is the result of innumerable indiviaual blows of the axeman in levelling the forests; of the labors of innumerable masons and carpenters in building our cities; of innumerable diggers of our canals; of great multitudes of farmers cultivating their own lands, as if there were but one farm on the earth to be ploughed, and fenced, and The looms and spindles of the land are individual things, and there are individual minds that attend to them. All this aggregate of beauty and of wealth exists because there are an innumerable number of operatives, each minding his own business, and each, perhaps unconsciously, contributing to the beauty of the whole—as the individual rose on the prairie contributes its own part to the beauty of the whole.

Under these arrangements, and by these laws, there is a third thing which demands a somewhat more extended illustration. It is, that while the individual necessarily occupies this important place in society according to the arrangements of our Maker, there is a field left for voluntary combination of all sorts for good. This

leads me directly to the

III. Third point, which I proposed to consider—the place which

the individual may voluntarily occupy in promoting the cause of religion. A good man in the sphere in which Providence places him, should he never make any voluntary effort to go out of that sphere, cannot but do good, for there is an unconscious and undesigned influence in favor of virtue which every such man exerts. and which is of inestimable value to the cause of truth. world could not do without this, and no good man can possibly live in vain, unless he withdraws himself to a cave or a dungeon. A consistent Christian father, mother, son, brother, merchant, neighbor, lawyer, farmer, cannot but do good by an example of virtue and piety, and by the discharge of the duties to which these natural relations give rise; though he may not be doing all the good which he might do if he would combine his influence more with others. For, there is a higher and more decisive good of a voluntary kind which can be done without disregarding any of these relations, or impairing at all this involuntary influence on the world. In the course of thought pursued thus far in this discourse, I have considered the former of these influences; I shall now proceed, in what remains of the discourse, to illustrate the latter—the place which the individual may voluntarily occupy in promoting the cause of religion. I refer now particularly to Christians; and in illustrating this part of my subject, it will be natural to notice the slight sense of personal obligation felt in general by professed Christians; and then to consider the place which the individual Christian may and should voluntarily occupy.

1. First, the slight sense of personal obligation among Christians. I mean by this, that there are large numbers in the Christian churches who have only the feeblest conviction, if they have any, of obligation to make direct personal efforts to promote the common cause; and that the responsibility of maintaining and carrying forward religion in the world in the more direct, and self-denying, and voluntary efforts, is devolved on others. A few brief illustrations here will show what I particularly wish to get before your minds. First, there is a feeling that the ministers of the gospel should be peculiarly holy, and self-denying, and dead to the world—dead to its pleasures, its gains, its ambition, far more than others. will any one point me to a place in the New Testament which requires ministers of the gospel to be more devoted to the work of their Master than other Christians; or to any precept or permission which would make that to be right in you which is wrong in us? Second, there is a prevalent feeling that the missionary to the heathen should be more deeply imbued with the spirit of the Lord Jesus, and with the principles of voluntary benevolence, than other men; that he should be more willing to take up his cross, and to traverse pathless sands, or go through driving snows to do good; that he, with almost no advantages for the cultivation of the graces of the spirit in a heathen land—a land without Sabbaths and sanctuaries, and Christian fellowship-should be more holy than we

who in a Christian land enjoy in rich abundance all the means of grace. But will any one point to the place in the New Testament which shows that there is to be one standard of holiness and selfdenial for him; another for you and me? Third, there is a feeling connected with that just adverted to, that private members of the church may do that which it would be highly inconsistent and improper for ministers of the gospel to do; that they may train up their families in a different manner; that they may engage in other forms of amusement; and that they may cherish and manifest a spirit of worldliness which would be wholly improper in their Christian pastor. But where in the New Testament will any statement be found which, in regard to amusement, and conversation, and general manner of life, makes a distinction between a pastor and any of the members of his flock? Fourth, there is a feeble sense, on the great body of professed Christians, of personal responsibility in regard to the institutions and duties of religion. I allude to the slight impression among many private members of the church, that any portion of the responsibility rests on them, or that they have anything more to do than to render the most general countenance in favor of religion. How few are they in any church who feel the responsibility of laboring for the conversion of sinners, as a specific thing to be done! How few are they who feel any responsibility for keeping up meetings for social prayer! How few are they, who among those who are well qualified, who feel under obligation to engage in sabbath school instruction. How few are they, and even among those who will not refuse to contribute to the object when applied to, who feel under personal obligation to originate any movement for the promotion of the objects of Christian benevolence, or to be the well-known and efficient patrons of the institutions which contemplate the conversion of the world! On the minds of the few these obligations are deeply, and permanently felt; on the mass even of professed Christians, it is feared, they are not felt; by the mass certainly they are not regarded.

2. I will proceed, then, to show the place which the individual Christian may occupy, and should occupy in the promotion of the

cause of religion. The statement must be a brief one.

First, every professing Christian, with whatever denomination he may be connected, bears a portion of the honor and the responsibility of religion in the world. He is a part of that total church which the Saviour came to redeem, and which is declared by him to be "the light of the world, and the salt of the earth," and to which he has issued the commandment to "preach the gospel to every creature." Whatever there is of honor, of purity, of truth, of respectability, in that church, is in part intrusted to his hands—as to each freeman in a republic is committed a portion of the honor of his country; to each soldier in an army a portion of the honor of her flag. When he became a member of that church, by the very nature of the transaction, a portion of its honor was intrusted

to him; and by the same transaction he assumed a portion of its responsibility. In his profession of religion, he identified himself with the Lord Jesus, and with his cause. He left the community of the "world," and united himself with the fraternity of Christians. He abandoned, of choice, the associations where amusement, and wealth, and vanity, and pleasure are all that is sought, for that community where religion is primary, and where men bind themselves to live unto God. He left the abodes of sensuality and of song; came out of the halls where are music and dancing; forsook the "tents of wickedness," and voluntarily entered the temple over whose doors is inscribed "holiness to the Lord," and became a dweller in that city—the holy city of Zion—whose "walls are salvation, and whose gates are praise." I say, he did it of choice. No man forced him to do it. Nor father, nor mother, nor pastor, nor friend, nor foe, compelled him to become a member of the Christian church. It was among the most free acts of his life, in many instances among the most deliberate and carefully weighed. In many cases it was the result of warm gushing emotion; in all it was the result of choice, when he came and pledged himself over the sacred emblems of the body and blood of Christ to lead a holy life. Now, into such a community, what right has any one to bring a worldly spirit? Why should any one voluntarily enter into such an association only to live to himself? What right has he to withdraw from his brethren; to spread around him the maxims and feelings which pertain to the world; to refuse to co-operate with those who are endeavoring to maintain the common cause? How can he forgot, moreover, that there is always a part of the world which will form their idea of the nature of religion from the conduct of the private members of the church? They form it not from the Bible; for many never read the Bible. They form it not from what is stated in the pulpit; for many never enter the sanctuary, and if they do, they say that religion is not what is taught, but what it is seen to be in the lives of its friends. They form it not wholly from the lives of the ministers of the gospel, for they say that preachers are professionally holy, and that it is their business to be religious; and perhaps they may charitably add that they are paid for it, and that their very living depends on it. They form not their views of religion from the lives and deaths of the martyrs. Many of these have never heard the names of the martyrs, and the world cares little how Ignatius and Cranmer felt at the stake. But they form their impressions of the nature of religion from the lives of the individual members of the church—their honesty, and integrity, and fidelity; their temper, and their consistent zeal in that noble cause which they have voluntarily embraced, and judge of religion by what they see there.

Second. Every Christian has facilities for doing something in the cause of the Redeemer which no other one has, and his individual influence and talent is demanded in that cause. A father has an

influence over the little circle where he presides, which no other man can have; and that influence, if he is a Christian, belongs to Christ, and is that on which he much relies for the promotion of his cause in the world. A mother has an influence within that narrow but sacred enclosure, which is as valuable and controlling as it is interesting and tender. No artificial forms of society can create it elsewhere; no law, no fashion, no art. That too belongs to Christ. So the physician; so the teacher; so the magistrate; so the eloquent advocate; so he who has been trained in the schools of learning; so he who is endowed with eminent gifts by his Maker. There is an influence which each man possesses which is of value to the cause of virtue and religion; and that individual influence the Redeemer claims in its proper sphere as his, to be employed in the promotion of his cause in the world. On any one man, in proportion to his ability, the claim is as imperative as on another; and the fact that you have any peculiar facility for doing good imposes the obligation so to employ it. And the work which you are to do need not be that which amazes the world by the eloquence of a Massillon or a Whitfield; not that which lays the foundation of undying fame by the reasoning powers of an Edwards; not that which moves nations, and effects a sudden change in human affairs by such mighty efforts as those of Luther or Knox; not that which produces a new and enduring organization of men like the far-seeing sagacity and the piety of Wesley. It may be the noiseless and unobtrusive daily work of doing your duty in a family, of teaching a class of little children in a Sunday School, of visiting a cottage of poverty and want, of putting quietly a little tract into the hand of a neighbor or a stranger, of going to your closet and there unobserved by men pleading for the salvation of a world.

Third. Success in promoting religion in the world depends on personal and individual effort. There are no armies which secure a victory in the battle-field but such as are made up of individuals: there are no cities, towns, palaces, navies, or bulwarks of war but such as are the work of individuals. The victory of Nelson at Trafalgar depended, perhaps, more than on anything else, on the magic power of the watchword of the day, "England expects every man to do his duty." "All at work, and always at work," was the significant and characteristic motto of John Wesley; and to the principle which prompted this, under the divine blessing, can be traced the far-spread and happy results of the labors of the denomination of Christians of which he was the founder. In building the immense coral reefs of the South Seas, each insect assiduously labors while life lasts, and the vast work is done by individ-In our own land, these forests have been levelled, and these cities built, and these canals and railroads made, and these farms have opened their bosoms to the sun and rain, and these gardens make the air fragrant, and these ships whiten every sea, because an immense population has been individually at work.

It is just so in religion. Salvation is an individual work; and destruction is an individual work. Satan plies his powers not on a community as an abstract thing, but on the individual, as if there were but one, and as if he had nothing else to do but to ruin that one soul. The man that becomes an infidel is an individual. The young female that is seduced from virtue is an individual. The young men that are made intemperate or licentious are individuals; and there is as definite and distinct a work in reference to each one as if he were the solitary dweller on earth. When the great tempter approached the bowers of Eden, he felt that if he was to be successful, he must approach the mother of mankind as an individual; he must find her alone. So the great poet sings:—

"He sought them both, but wished his hap might find Eve separate; he wished, but not with hope Of what so seldom chanced; when to his wish, Beyoud his hope, Eve separate he spies, Veiled in a cloud of fragrance, where she stood, Half spied, so thick the roses blushing round About her glowed."

"——' Behold alone,' said he,
'The woman, opportune to all attempts,
Her husband, for I view far round, not nigh.
So spake the enemy of mankind, enclosed
In serpent, inmate bad! and toward Eve
Addressed his way."

Par. Lost, B. ix.

And ever since, the work of destruction has been, and must be, a work on individual minds.

And so in the salvation of men. It is a work that pertains to individuals. Christ died for individuals; and each one who is brought to heaven is to be renewed, sanctified, guided, defended, as if he were alone. That child in your family is to be converted. That member of your Sunday school class is to be saved. That brother is to be renewed. That sister, daughter, wife, is to be brought to love the Saviour. These thousands and tens of thousands round about us, are individuals, and are to be saved as such. In each case it is an individual work. It is not a vague, intangible, unmeaning, and abstract generality. It is the work of saving individual sinners from the horrors of eternal despair; and each one is to be saved by the same anxiety, and effort, and prayer as if he were alone.

There is a fourth and final remark which I will make, in accordance with the views advanced in this discourse. It is this, that there is a large field of Christian effort, in which, without sacrificing any principle pertaining to you as an individual, you may co-operate with others in promoting the great end of all social organization. You labor on your own farm, or in your workshop, or in your own office or study, and promote your own welfare, and the good of your family. Yet, in entire consistency with your own

individual plans, you unite with your neighbors in building a bridge, or making a road for the public good; in erecting a school-house where your children may be educated together; or in building a church where you may worship God. You have your own views of poetry, architecture, and the arts. You have your own ways of tilling your ground, and your own theory about the succession of crops. and about the time of sowing your wheat. You build your barn and your apiary in your own way; and yet you can unite with your neighbor in promoting education, and temperance, and the love of peace—for then you meet on common ground. Calvinist, and in your own place may maintain and enjoy your views of religion, and seek to promote them, and defend them when you are attacked in the best way you can. Another is an Arminian, and with equal freedom has a right to maintain his own principles, and make them the basis of his joys and hopes; but still, there are more vital points in which you agree than there are in which you differ; and you may stand up side by side in defending your common Christianity in opposition to all "Infidels, Jews, Greeks or Mohammedans;" in distributing the Bible, the charter of your common hopes; in maintaining everywhere the doctrine of human depravity; the fact of the atonement, and the necessity of regeneration by the You are a Presbyterian, Holy Spirit, and the duty of holy living. not from chance, and not because you deem your principles of no value, and not worth defending; and yet with Methodist, and Episcopal, and Baptist brethren, and with all "who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity," you can see that there is common ground which you can take in regard to the government of God. and the atonement, and the character of man, and the nature of true religion, and the doctrines of future retribution. Here we may stand together, compromising no principles; affecting not our influence as individuals; but blending our power into one, as beams of light come out from the sun and mingle together, pouring the flood of day on these worlds—yet capable, if we choose to do it, of being divided by the prism into red, and orange, and yellow, and green, and blue, and indigo, and violet, and all made up in fact of such rays; or as many little individual rivulets hasten down from the mountains to form the mighty river as it rolls on to the ocean.

# DEATH AND THE SHADOW OF DEATH.

#### BY REV. ISAAC HEADLEY.

EVERY shadow has a substance, and every substance a shadow, when light is reflected upon it. There is death, and there is the shadow of death, when that light which Christ has shed on the tomb is reflected upon it. "It is appointed unto all men once to die." And there never have been but two exceptions among all the countless millions of former generations; and we have no reason to believe there will ever be another, until the resurrection morn, when the bodies of those who are alive will experience a change equivalent to death.

To the impenitent, dying is a double death; for all their hopes and expectations die and perish with them, and they sink down into all the horrors of the second death. It is a fearful thing for a person and his hopes to expire together. To such, death is indeed the

king of terrors.

But not so with dying believers; though they too must pass through the valley, yet faith enables them to do it without fear or dismay, for it is only the shadow of death through which they pass into their long-desired and wished-for home, and rest with their God and Saviour in heaven; hence they can say with the Psalmist, "Though I walk through the valley and shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." Although the Christian knows he must die: must put off this earthly tabernacle before he can enter heaven; must have a conflict with death; and although he knows he must fall in the conflict, yet faith assures him though he falls he will conquer-will gain the victory, through the Captain of his salvation, who has won it for him; he can therefore by anticipation shout the triumph even before he engages in the conflict, "O death, where is thy sting; O grave, where is thy victory?" As the sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law; and as Christ has become the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth; hence he has disarmed sin of its power, and death of its sting.

To real Christians death has, as it were, changed his form, yea, even lost his substance, and nothing of him is left but his shadow; sleep, merely the image of death. It is death, not the Christian that dies. He just begins to live; he falls asleep in Jesus, and his soul

awakes in immortal life, glory and blessedness, where death can never enter or have any more dominion over him forever. Death is not only a conquered enemy, but he is also transmuted into a friend. "Death is yours," saith the apostle; yours to deliver you from all sin, sorrow, and suffering; yours to introduce you into the presence of your God and Saviour, and into all the pure and holy

iovs and felicities of heaven.

Who would not wish to die the death of the righteous, and have their last end like his? And whose inmost soul does not shudder at the thought of dying the death of the wicked, and have his last end and final portion like theirs? What cause have we to thank God for giving to feeble, dying mortals, such a victory over the monster death, as to enable them to contemplate the closing scene of life not only with composure, but with pleasing anticipation, "having a desire to depart and be with Christ." And many others, "who through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage," yet when the time of their departure drew near, and they were about to step down into the lone valley, have found death so disarmed of his sting, and disrobed of his terror, that they could, while passing through his shadow, triumphantly sing—

"Lord, lend your wings, I mount! I fly!
O grave! where is thy victory!
O death! where is thy sting!"

O what a debt of love, gratitude and praise do we owe the everblessed Saviour, who has purchased all this for us by his own sufferings and death; he encountered and conquered death in his most horrid forms, that he might give his faithful followers an easy and triumphant victory over him.—N. Y. Evangelist.

### XV.

## THE WEAPONS OF OUR WARFARE.\*

### BY SAMUEL M. WORCESTER, D.D.,

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"For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh; (for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds;) casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into capitylity every thought to the obedience of Christ."—2 Coz. x. 3-5.

In the "lively oracles," both earlier and later, "the knowledge of God" denotes or implies true religion. As used by the apostles, it is but another expression for the Gospel, or "the truth as in Jesus." Evidence of this we have in the text, and in many other passages of the New Testament.

"The knowledge of God," important as it is to the welfare of man, both in this life and the future, has never had free course. "The carnal mind," because of its "enmity against God," has desperately resisted "the grace that bringeth salvation, teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world."—With a very obvious, if not also a peculiarly impressive significance, in the times of Paul, the self-denying and perilous exertions and exposures of himself and other followers of Christ were represented as a "warfare,"—themselves, as "soldiers,"—their means of operation and defence, as "swords" and "helmets,"—and even the "Prince of Peace,"—their Leader and Lord—as the "Captain of Salvation."

What the apostle intended by "strongholds" is partially intimated by what he says of "imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God." There can be no doubt, that he comprehends in this description all the vain speculations, conceits, devices, and pretences of self-righteousness, selfsufficiency, and self-delusion; in short, everything which can be arraigned in opposition to "the truth of God and the faith of Jesus."

And how did he and his associates prosecute their "warfare" against "spiritual wickedness?" Although "in the flesh," and therefore subject to many and great infirmities and temptations, they did not strive to obtain their "incorruptible crown," or to accomplish

<sup>\*</sup> Preached before the Massachusetts Pastoral Association, at Boston, May 28th, 1850.

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any of their purposes, by means or instrumentalities, which are congenial to selfishness and ungodliness. "For," as he affirms, "the weapons of our warfare are not carnal." It is evident, that he means as if he had said,—we attempt no coercion or violence. No fraud, no self-aggrandizement, no corruption of the word of God, can be laid to our charge. We may indeed invoke miraculous judgments in vindication of our despoiled authority. But we much prefer to "beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ," and to speak with far less of assurance, than would become us, of the "authority which the Lord hath given for edification, and not for destruction."

Laying aside the metaphors of the text, I propose to specify and illustrate the principal means, by which the great apostle so successfully labored to promote the Gospel of the grace of God; and by which he became so pre-eminently a model for the "ministry of reconciliation" among all people and throughout all ages,—until the last message of redeeming love shall be delivered in the name of Jesus

1. The apostle labored to promote the Gospel, by publishing it as a definite and distinctive system of faith and practice.

As in the material, so in the moral world, when "God said, Let there be light, there was light, and God divided the light from the darkness." "The light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" shone into the heart of Saul of Tarsus. The doctrine of Christ and him crucified, like Christ himself, was to him no longer "without form or comeliness." He saw in clearness and resplendence the amazing "mystery, which was kept secret since the world began,"—the way of salvation by a sincere, penitential faith in the blood of the cross. It was not an airy, misty, shadowy, undefined, and undefinable something or somewhat; but it was "the word of life," which could be "seen," be "looked upon," and be "handled."

When, therefore, Paul went out to preach to his fellow-men, he carried with him a form of doctrine, which he could publish and "deliver," as such, to all who became the disciples of his Master. It was a "form of sound words," which the faithful could "hold fast" unto death. It was "truth," and the truth, in a reality and with a blessedness, of which he had sure and most ennobling experience. In all things he thus had an incalculable advantage, in encountering the philosophy of the schools, and vulgar superstition, whether associated with the bewildering traditions of the Jew, or the debasing mythologies of the Gentile. He could edify, or build up, as well as demolish and destroy.

His faith did not consist in "not believing." His creed was neither a summary of negatives, nor of disclaimers. He could announce to all men everywhere, as "a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners;" for the Living God, who made heaven and earth, "gave

his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." In few words he could answer the question, "What must I do to be saved?" Or he could discuss the great doctrines of justification by faith, and of atonement, in elaborate treatises, as in the Epistles to the Romans and the Hebrews. In either case he had something positive, substantial, real, visible, and tangible. He was neither a pantheist, nor a mystic, a transcendentalist nor an enthusiast.

2. It may next be remarked, that Paul labored to promote the Gospel, by publishing it as indispensable to salvation, and as free-

ly offered to all.

It made no difference, whether he was addressing Jews or Greeks. barbarian, Scythian, bond or free. He "preached Christ" to all. as the only Saviour from "the wrath to come." No one, however, could better have known the first impressions of the story of the cross,—especially upon minds of the higher cast, both in activity and attainment. The intellectual habits, and the moral associations of those in the great cities of wealth, learning, luxury, and pride, in which most of all the apostles preached,-gave them ideas of dogmatical and irresponsible self-consequence, and predisposed them in large masses to repel with ineffable scorn the uncompromising and humbling claims of Christ and him crucified. in all places and among all people, without the least respect of persons, he proclaimed the "Gospel of Christ, as the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." "The love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead! Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new God hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

He knew, that "of God Christ Jesus is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption,—that, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." He knew and felt most deeply, that "the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power, when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe." And hence it was, that, while willing to be himself accursed from Christ for his brethren, his kinsmen according to the flesh, he laid to their charge as the sin above all their sins, that of "forbidding" him "to speak to the Gentiles, that they

might be saved."

As a "Hebrew of the Hebrews," he had himself sought righteousness and heaven by the deeds of the law. His eyes had been shut, and had then been opened to see, that no man on earth was ever so justified and saved. Ruined and helpless—as a man weltering in his own heart's blood,—Jesus Christ was revealed to him, as "the

end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." now was the transformation of his views and feelings, such the inward and transporting witness of the remedial efficacy of the doctrine of Christ and him crucified, that he was as sure as of his being, that whosoever believeth hath eternal life, beyond all possibility of disappointment and shame. The great problem of "glory and virtue" had been solved by the revelation of the Son of God; and not a shadow of a doubt remained, that, by faith in his name. the regenerated soul would have the victory over death and hell. and be crowned with spotless and immortal righteousness. although at Antioch, in Pisidia, he could not refrain from "shaking off the dust of his feet," as a solemn and awful testimony in the name of Christ, against the "despisers," who "beheld" to "wonder and perish;" yet did he stand forth before all the world, as himself the "chief of sinners," and "a pattern" for the effectual persuasion of all the anxious and the agonized, on account of sin and the second death, that, not for a moment might they despair of pardon and life, if they would but remember the abounding mercy of the Lord Jesus to him, who was before "a blasphemer and a persecutor."

3. Paul labored to promote the Gospel, it may further be remark-

ed, by publishing it in simplicity.

Having "neither received it of man, nor was taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ," he preached it as he also received it. He had no improvements to make upon Jesus Christ. He discarded all the philosophy of the world, as "vain," because "foolishness with God." The truths of Christianity he cordially embraced as facts, in regard to which he was not authorized to raise "doubtful disputations," any more than "foolish questions." All admixtures of mere reason or imagination he vigilantly shunned, although the chief of the apostles, and accomplished in all the learning of his

age.

Capable of efforts of oratory, which were not unnoticed by Longinus, in his illustrations of the sublime, and in connection with such names as Demosthenes, it must have been sheer malice or nothing better, which prompted some of the Corinthians to say of him, that "his bodily presence was weak and his speech contemptible." But well aware of the taste of that ancient Paris, the city of Corinth, and of the fascination of rhetorical brilliancies of expression and factitious accomplishments of delivery, he there appears to have been more than ever solicitous to keep himself behind the cross, and to commend the simple, the pure, and undefiled doctrine of Christ to every man's conscience. Yet he could never have had a greater temptation to avail himself of what was accounted "excellency of speech," or the "enticing words of man's wisdom."

It may occur to you, however, and should not be forgotten here, that in no epistles of Paul is there so much of genuine classical perfection of style, as in those to the Corinthians. That fifteenth

chapter of his first Epistle is unsurpassed in every quality of chaste and terse, elegant and energetic, beautiful and sublime composition. Still you cannot fail to perceive, that, in all his matter and in all his manner of discourse, he betrays no ambition or desire to be praised and honored by the ungodly, whether learned or illiterate, noble or ignoble; but was ever aiming with most unfeigned solicitude to win souls to Christ, that Christ might have all the glory.

In the providence of God, the language of Greece—the richest of all languages of the heathen world, and that most extensively spoken in the Roman empire, at the time of "the beginning of the Gospel"-was made the repository and the vehicle of the message of the Redeemer's love to uncounted millions. But even the peerless language of Homer and Plato, of Herodotus and Euripides, was inadequate, without much "private interpretation," to express every "truth as in Jesus," in its various forms and connections, so that there should be no mode or degree of unintelligibleness or obscurity. Hence Peter had occasion to say, that there were "some things hard to be understood" in the epistles of his "beloved brother Paul; -whether or not his "beloved brother Paul" might have indulged

in a similar fraternal criticism upon his own.

But whatever there may be in the style of Paul, which may have obscured his meaning, at the time of his personal ministration, and which cannot now be fully elucidated, we may be very certain, that the difficulty could never have arisen from an affectation of originality, or of depth of thought, or from any artistic structure or embellishment. We may concede, that parts of his Epistles are quite dark, if not impenetrable; yet, as compared with the whole, they are like the solar spots, and would, perhaps, entirely disappear, if it were not for the dark places in the hearts and in "the eyes" of the "understanding," not only of believers generally, but also of the very best Christian expositors. So clear, so effulgent are the cardinal principles and the essential doctrines which he taught, that our Sabbath School children may understand them, and be "wise unto salvation." No one who heard Paul preach, or read what he wrote, need to have "perished for lack of knowledge." On the contrary, "leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ," he might "go on to perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith towards God, of the doctrine of baptisms, and of the laying on of hands, and of the resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment."

4. Another means by which Paul labored to promote the Gospel,

was that of publishing it in godly sincerity.

He really believed what he preached. His whole manner of preaching and of living was a demonstration of the genuineness, the cordiality of his personal faith in the doctrine of Christ. "bore in his body the marks of the Lord Jesus," and so lived unto his Saviour and Lord, that he was dead unto the world. No selfish or secular end whatever could have furnished him the slightest motive to do or to suffer what he did, in publishing the word of salvation. He could thus appeal to his "manner of life," as a de-

cisive witness of his godly sincerity.

"Our rejoicing is this," he says to the Corinthians, "the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward. For we write none other things unto you, than what ye read or acknowldge Therefore, seeing we have this even unto the end. . . . ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; but have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty; not walking in craftiness nor handling the word of God deceitfully." "I have coveted no man's silver or gold, or apparel,"-said he to the elders of Ephesus. "And ve yourselves know, that these hands have ministered to my necessities, and to them that were with me." To the Thessalonians he wrote,-" Our exhortation was not from deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile. But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the Gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts. For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloak of covetousness: God Nor from men sought we glory, neither from you, neither from others. . . Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblamably we behaved ourselves among you that believed; and how we exhorted and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children, that ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you to his kingdom and glory."

The peculiar impressiveness of this appeal may be lost upon those, who should happen to forget or fail to be reminded, that many have a character of excellence in public, which belongs not to their private walks, and is unknown among the observers of their daily life. He who could say,-"I have wronged no man, I have corrupted no man, I have defrauded no man,"-" ye are witnesses and God also how holily and justly and unblamably we behaved ourselves among you that believe," must have been a man who, amidst the abounding corruptions and impurities of the times, would have endured the scrutiny of fire upon fire. And this character of untarnished righteousness, of incorruptible honesty and sincerity, must have imparted, to all his preaching of the Gospel of the Holy One and the Just, a power and a charm of conviction and persuasion, which neither Socrates nor Tully, nor Quinctilian, could have ever imagined in all their grandest conceptions of the moral worth of "the good man"-irreproachable purity of life,-as the crown-

ing perfection of consummate oratory.

5. The earnestness of Paul was another means, by which he

labored so effectively in promoting the Gospel.

I cannot here withhold a reference to a fact of unwritten biography, which the subject in this view very forcibly recalls to my mind. While pursuing my studies at the neighboring University,

there was a fellow-student from one of the opulent families of the For some months, he was reported to be in a state of partial derangement, and was at length obliged to leave his class. Whatever instructions he may have received in childhood, it afterwards appeared from very unexpected disclosures of his history, that he was almost an entire stranger to the Scriptures. Before leaving his class, and while much depressed in spirits-craving relief he knew not what—he one day took up a Bible, or his Greek Testament. He soon found himself attracted and absorbed by the "Acts of the Apostles," in which Luke has so graphically described the conversion of Saul of Tarsus, and narrated the more important events and incidents of his subsequent career. He became intensely interested in the character of Paul, as a character. more he read of him, the more his admiration increased. And if I do not greatly err in memory, it was the earnestness of Paul, more than any other characteristic, which deeply affected his heart, and was blessed of God to his ultimate conversion. In all his life, as he thought, he had never found a man with a soul like that of Paul; so earnestly devoted to his God, and to the work of spreading the knowledge of salvation by the Lord Jesus Christ.\*

And is it strange, that he should have been so affected? Who can now read of Paul in those delineations of his fellow-laborer, and in his own writings, without seeing that he was indeed in earnest, like a man, who felt to the very utmost power of emotion, and not seldom to agony, that to those who perished, he was a savor of death unto death; but to those that were saved, of life unto life! Neither the "love that passeth knowledge," nor "the terrors of the Lord" could ever languish sleepily upon his tongue! In earnest he always was: and sometimes, as before Felix, "terribly

in earnest.'

His mode of reasoning very strikingly displays this element of character and of power. Let him take any point to argue, and however systematic may be his plan, or important the regularity of the succession of his positions or facts, he proceeds but a little way, before he seems to forget that he is reasoning, and breaks out in some burst of glowing exclamation or appeal. His reasoning is always "logic set on fire,"—and fire so powerful, as to threaten to burn off the very strongest links of the chain of the argument.

But in all his earnestness, you see no proof of mere animal excitement, or of extravagance and enthusiasm. It was emotion, inspired legitimately by the realities of the great and the glorious theme, which enkindled and exalted his soul. And hence, we cannot doubt, that it was with an overwhelming moral dignity and grandeur, that he replied to Festus:—"I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak forth the words of truth and soberness!"

<sup>\*</sup> It would not be proper to say more. The facts were not known, until after the student had left Cambridge; and it is doubtful whether any of the officers of the University were ever aware of what the writer has here ventured to record.

6. The boldness of Paul may next be specified, as a means by

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which he endeavored to promote the Gospel.

Hardly had the scales fallen from his eyes at Damascus, after "the heavenly vision," before he "entered the synagogues," and "preached Christ that he is the Son of God. All that heard him were amazed, and said, Is not this he that destroyed them, which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests?" When subsequently he went to Jerusalem, "Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord on the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus, in the name of Jesus. And he was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem. And he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians; but they went about to slay him."

As he began, so he continued. Surely he was not unapprised of the scorn and the obloquy, the scourgings, imprisonments, and deaths, which everywhere threatened the heralds of the cross of Calvary. Beside the vivid suggestions of his own experience, while "breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord,"-suggestions which would be sufficient to dishearten any man who had not the fortitude and the courage of the noblest in the army of the martyrs,—we find, that, at the very outset of his ministry for Christ, he received a revelation of suffering, no less than of salvation. While Ananias was hesitating to perform the service, to which a vision directed him,—thinking it impossible, that Saul of Tarsus had become a man of prayer in spirit and in truth,—"Go thy way," said the Lord: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel. For I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake."

It was then in full view of all his liabilities to reproach, and ignominy, and torture, and frightful martyrdom, that he went through all the populous cities, the marts of commerce, and the seats of opulence and learning,—preaching boldly the gospel of the kingdom of the Son of God. If men of the highest rank ridiculed his doctrine, and scoffed at his warnings, they could never have raised a blush upon his cheek. He could say to all, I AM NOT ASHAMED OF THE GOSPEL. He could "weep in secret places for their pride," like the prophet of Lamentations; but no reproach or reviling could have ever caused him to appear "with confusion of face." Never did he flee for his life, or hide himself, because he feared death in any of its terrors; for he was always "ready, not to be bound only, but also to die for the name of the Lord Jesus."

Beyond a question, his appeal to those elders of Ephesus was applicable to all, whom he had been permitted to address according to his heart's desire. "I have not shunned to declare unto you the whole counsel of God." He neither disguised the truth, nor

withheld any truth, nor neutralized the truth, that he might make his doctrine more agreeable to the depraved taste of the carnal mind. In the conclusion of his Epistle to the Church at Ephesus,—written when he was in chains,—is the memorable exhortation, to "put on the whole armor of God, that they might be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. . . . Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints, and for me," it is added, "that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the Gospel; for which I am an ambassador in bonds, that therein I may speak boldly as I ought to speak."

7. If Paul was distinguished for boldness, he was no less remarkable for the meekness and humility, with which also he labored to

promote the Gospel.

Fierce as he was, before he became a new man, he was so transformed into the image of Christ, that it might be said of him most truly, that he was "meek and lowly in heart." He could suffer injuries without any desire of revenge; and whatever trials might come upon him, it was all well, if the power of Christ was present with him for his strength of consolation. The remembrance of what he once was, while a destroyer of the faith, and the consciousness of the unspeakable mercy which had been bestowed upon him, disarmed him of all asperity, and subdued all his haughtiness. This we are fully warranted to believe, from his words and his example. Still it was true, that he insisted firmly and indomitably upon a recognition of his rights, as a Roman citizen, and withstood even Simon Peter to the face, when he was justly "to be blamed."

Far and wide did Paul preach the gospel, with signal and signalized success. Yet he never speaks of his distinction in this respect, as if disposed to bring himself into notice. Upon one occasion he said,—"I suppose I was not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles." It was when compelled for the honor of Christ to vindicate himself against the outrageous aspersions of those, who craftily and shamelessly endeavored to undermine and destroy his influence in a church, for which he had toiled with such self-sacrificing endurance. The same remark will apply to other expressions of a similar nature. Vastly more congenial was the language of his first Epistle to that church: "Last of all Christ was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time. For I am the least of the apostles, and am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all; yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me."

How admirable the wisdom and the spirit of his charge to Timothy! "O man of God, follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. . . . Foolish and unlearned

questions [questions indicating both ignorance and folly] avoid, knowing that they gender contentions. And the servant of the Lord must not contend; but be gentle to all men, apt to teach, patient,—in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of

the truth."

"Be kindly affectionate one to another with brotherly love, in honor preferring one another," was an injunction to the Romans. To the Colossians also, and to the kindred in Christ generally, he wrote in the style of commandment or exhortation, enforcing the obligations of humility and meekness, upon all classes and orders in the household of faith,—as if these graces of the Christian character were of immeasurable importance. And never could he have written as he did to those who had known him so well, if they had not indubitable evidence, that every word was true when he said: "Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it; being defamed, we entreat; we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things."

8. We have another and a most important view of the means by which Paul labored to promote the Gospel, when we consider that he always published it, as being made effectual in no other way,

than by the power of the Holy Ghost.

Not the slightest hope of success would the apostle have had, were it not that his "speech was in demonstration of the Spirit and of power." In every variety of manner, he proclaimed as his joy and exultation, that all the glory of the triumphs and the trophies of the Gospel belonged to his Saviour and his God. "We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." He never speaks or writes of his success in publishing the glad tidings of salvation by the blood of Christ, but as accomplished by the "Lord working with him," or as if his unworthy instrumentality would have availed nothing, and less than nothing, if the word preached had not been "mighty through God." How he rebuked the Corinthians and glorified God, when he said:—" Whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ve not carnal and walk as men? For while one saith, I am of Paul, and another, I am of Apollos, are ye not carnal? Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord Jesus gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth, but GOD THAT GIVETH THE INCREASE."

9. I add, briefly, that Paul published the Gospel, as being made

effectual in answer to fervent prayer.

From the moment he became convicted of sin, and was enlightened into a knowledge of Christ, he was a man of prayer,—earnest, energetic, effectual prayer. "What wilt thou have me to do?" was his first petition, and we know not but his last. Certain it is, that from the time his Lord could say of him, "behold he prayeth,"—up to the latest hour of record, we have ample proof that, in enjoining upon the Thessalonians and other Christians, to "pray without ceasing," he enjoined what he himself most sacredly performed.

I know not in how many instances he uses such language as,-"Without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers." And to what end? "We pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power; that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and of the Lord Jesus Christ." Again he says to the Thessalonians, "Brethren, pray for us." How he exhorted the Ephesians "to pray always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, that utterance might be given" to him, for a bold and faithful proclamation of "the mystery of the Gospel,"may here be instructively recalled to memory, in connection with his words to the Colossians. "Continue in prayer, and watch unto the same with thanksgiving. At the same time also praying for us. that God would open to us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds. That I may make it manifest as I ought to speak."

10. I will notice but one other means, by which Paul labored to promote the Gospel. It has been repeatedly implied. He spoke

the truth in love.

Love to God, to Christ, to the brethren, and to sinners, was, beyond all dispute, the predominant, and all-controlling passion of the great apostle to the Gentiles. It glows in every sermon. It beams with celestial brightness in every epistle. I should be glad, if the time permitted, to illustrate each of the modes or elements of the love in the constant exercise of which Paul preached and exemplified "the faith once delivered to the saints." But I will only refer to the "charity," which he has so inimitably portrayed in the 13th chapter of his first Epistle to the Corinthians. That chapter was written, it must be borne in mind, when he was in those circumstances of most unreasonable, aggravated, cruel provocation! And where in all the writings of the apostles, is there one chapter more beautiful and tender, in sentiment, feeling, and expression?

When the apostle thus wrote of the "charity" that "suffereth long and is kind. . . . Seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked; thinketh no evil. . . . Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things;" can it be doubted by any one among us, that they who had seen the most of the real spirit and the true life of Paul, would at once recognize his own moral likeness? It was because of his own "charity," that he could say of his course among the Thessalonians,—"We were gentle among you even as a nurse cherisheth her children; so being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the Gospel of God only, but also our own

souls, because you were dear unto us." In the same spirit it was, that at Ephesus, "by the space of three years" he "ceased not to warn every man day and night with tears." But even this deeply affecting record is far from doing full justice to him, who could testify of himself, in the Epistle to the Romans:—"I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart; for I could wish myself were accursed from Christ, for my

brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh."

It is not strange, then, that a man of such spirit should have been so distinguished for his courtesy and urbanity, in his treatment of men of all ranks and conditions; and that he "became all things to all men," consistently with truth and faithfulness,-" that by all means he might save some." In this connection, however, some may call to mind certain examples of denunciation of opposers of They must not forget that the apostle refers to the conduct of subtle and malignant, mischievous and incorrigible enemies of all righteousness. And an anathema from one inspired of the Holy Ghost, is no more repugnant to the spirit of love unfeigned. than divine justice is irreconcilable with divine benevolence. Our Lord Jesus denounced the most dreadful woes upon the Scribes and Pharisees, yet wept over the devoted city. And Paul, while warning the disciples of the Lord against the character and the doom of opposers and apostates, breathed none other than the spirit of Christ. "Brethren, be ye followers of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample. For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you, even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction."

I must not enlarge. Much have I omitted, lest I should inexcusably presume upon your indulgence. But I could hardly feel warranted to say less, in exposition of the nature of the "weapons of our warfare,"—our own warfare, my brethren, if "we do not war according to the flesh," and if, like Paul, we labor to promote the Gospel, by publishing it as a definite and distinctive system of faith and practice, indispensable to salvation and freely offered to all; publishing it in simplicity and godly sincerity, without the inventions or admixtures, the artifices and embellishments of worldly wisdom, and without false professions to secure honors or emoluments; publishing it with earnestness most intense, as being a savor of life unto life, or of death unto death, and with boldness, as that of which none should be ashamed, but which all should be ready to confess and to proclaim in all places; publishing it with meekness and humility, because its most honored champions are themselves but pardoned rebels, and because their preaching is made effectual only by the power of the Holy Ghost, in answer to fervent prayer; and publishing it in love-love to God, love to Christ, love to the Church, love to all men-holy love-universal, unbounded, ever-enduring philanthropy.

These weapons are indeed not carnal. The means by which Paul achieved such triumphs for the honor of Christ Jesus, were of the kingdom which is "righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost." From those, who, as the professed friends of Christ, and of souls perishing in sin, would otherwise seek to gain victories and conquests in the empire of the powers of darkness, the cause of our Redeemer needs no assistance. One such warrior in "the good fight of faith," as was Paul, would achieve more than a thou-

sand thousand or a thousand million of them.

And as now we look back from our advanced position, can any distrust the "weapons of our warfare," which were ordained and furnished by Him, who is "wonderful in counsel and excellent in working?" Did not the ancient "soldiers of the cross" plant the banner of the Prince of Peace and of Life upon the ramparts or the ruins of all the majestic and magnificent structures of idolatry and classic mythology, throughout the almost interminable empire of the Cæsars? what "strongholds" then, from the Artic circle to the capes of the South Atlantic and Pacific, can be too strong for "the sacramental host of God's elect," if they will but take to themselves "the whole armor of God; having their loins girt about with truth, and having on the breast-plate of righteousness, and their feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith, and the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit?" As ministers at home, or as missionaries abroad—from the river to the ends of the earth,-what more do we need, and what have we to fear, if the truth and Christ be in us, and for us?

If ever for one moment we are tempted to inquire, whether, in "the faith once delivered to the saints," and in "the whole armor of God," we have all that is requisite for the world's emancipation from all its bondage,-let history speak to us, as God's witness in providence. Let it suffice, and more than suffice, to mark the recorded results of all such pretensions and movements, as those of some in our days, who claim to have left the prophets and apostles far behind them, and even to have hope of seeing, as well as heralding, a "better" Jesus, than "Paul preached!!" Such are they, who verily would "turn the world upside down," if large numbers could be infatuated or stultified enough, to embrace their impious and detestable fooleries,—gravely propounded as they are, with so many "goodly words," as reason, freedom, equality, fraternity, progress, happiness, perfection! Let them all throw off the mask, "as the manner of some is," and it is no violation of the "charity" which is of Christ, to say of them, that we should "see the dragon's nature in their bosom!"

It would be "a new thing under the sun," for Satan to "cast out Satan." And would that they who have named the name of Christ, and most of all that they who minister in that name, would more

experimentally and faithfully remember that his kingdom is not of this world; that, despised as may be the Gospel, it is mighty to the uttermost through Christ's all-sufficiency and almightiness; and that, while bold as lions, the servants of the Lord that bought them. with blood most precious, should ever be wise as serpents and harmless as doves! O if it had always been thus, there could not have been, at this eventful period of the 19th century, so much of the land of promise vet to be possessed—so many millions of heathen in such fearfully dark places of the earth, and who have never heard the name of Jesus, or the first note of the song :- "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth salvation!" If, since the farewell charge upon the Mount of Olives, all that have named the name of Christ. had been faithful to his word and spirit, as was Paul, then would they have been to the enemies of the cross "terrible as an army with banners;" and they would have gone forth from conquering to conquer, until long since "every knee" should have been constrained to "bow, and every tongue confess, that 'Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

It is, as I humbly conceive, no common responsibility, whatever may be said of the privilege,-which pertains to the office of a minister of the Gospel, in our ancient commonwealth of Massachu-May I then be permitted to inquire, to what end we have now come up to this city of the fathers and of the children, at this anniversary of "holy convocation?" What do we here, as ministers of the New Testament,-worthy in any measure of our "high calling,"-if "we seek our own, and not the things which are Jesus Christ's;" and if, while participating in these numerous solemnities, we do not find it in our hearts to return to our pulpits and the people of our charge, with a renewed resolution in love stronger than death, that we will PREACH CHRIST more faithfully than ever-as much as in us lies,-by the power "of faith and of the Holy Ghost?" What higher commission than ours can mortals have, from the highest heaven? And who is sufficient for the trust thereof, without Christ and the spirit of Christ, as his light,

love, and life?

While he himself, our adorable Master and Saviour, has left us in his own divine ministry—when "in the days of his flesh,"—that human example, which can so far be appropriated and approached, that Paul might say to us,—"Brethren, be ye followers of me, even as I am of Christ,"—it is yet an occasion of unspeakable gratitude, that we have the apostle's own undying example, for our instruction, our admonition, and our animating consolation. Can any of us follow him too closely, in any one principle, rule, or characteristic of all those means, by which "Christ wrought" in him, "to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed?" Ours is the same Lord, the same Gospel, the same baptism, the same rejoicing hope. Let us, therefore, so preach the Gospel, as we have him for our ex-

ample; and like him, let us feel that all our sufficiency is of God in Christ, and Christ in our own souls. And to this end, may the

word of Christ dwell in us richly in all wisdom!

"If the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?" Let no man, then, ever be at a loss to determine what it is that we preach, as the Gospel of Christ; and let no sincere and kindly-affectioned believer in Jesus ever have occasion for a doubt, that we preach the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth,—as opportunity is given us to magnify our office. Whatever may be the signs of the times; whatever the aspect of the churches in this "goodly heritage," now extended from ocean to ocean; whatever the encouragements or the discouragements in our immediate sphere of labor and of trial,—whether we have a refreshing from on high, or the love of many waxes cold, and iniquity abounds, and we seem to be in the very region and shadow of death;—let us still preach Christ and him crucified, as the sovereign remedy for all the woes of man, until time shall be no more.

In the spirit and devotedness of Paul, we also should be "determined not to know anything save Jesus Christ and him crucified." And like him too we should ever in our preaching, spontaneously and impressibly, make manifest our personal and our joyous faith in the Creator and the Crucified as One. Ineffectual, utterly ineffectual, for the purposes and the ends of the Christian ministry, will be all our preaching,—if we do not honor the Son even as the Father! It will not, it cannot be, in demonstration of the Spirit and of power,—witness, if example were needed, the memorable ministrations of Chalmers,—intellectual, accomplished, earnest, and eloquent as he was,—in his fourteen years at Kilmany. It cannot be possible for us to make too much of Christ, in our private and our public life; or to preach too many sermons all of Christ.

We are of course to avoid all appearance and all reality of aim at "excellency of speech," as if of men we sought glory. But the beauty of holiness and love in the Gospel is infinitely worthy of the richest and the purest offerings of human genius, learning, and refinement. True it is as ever, according to the sacred description and commendation of eloquence, that "a word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver." And we are without excuse,—certainly the most of us,—if we ever prompt a hearer to inquire, whether there be any incompatibility between the requirements of evangelical truth and the laws of good taste; or, whether any man can be warranted to make the offence of the cross still more an offence to the carnal mind, by a seeming or an actual disregard of those proprieties and attractions of style, in which the original Scriptures excel all the literature of all nations.

Such "foolishness" as Paul had in his preaching, it is very safe and very wise in us now to have. But his "foolishness of preaching," so called, was not *foolish* preaching, nor vulgarity, nor discourtesy. "Since I have known God in a saving manner," Henry

Martyn once remarked, "painting, poetry, and music, have had charms unknown to me before. I have received what I suppose is a taste for them: for religion has refined my mind, and made it susceptible of impressions for the sublime and beautiful. O how religion secures the heightened enjoyment of those pleasures which keep so many from God, by their becoming a source of pride!" Such a testimony is above suspicion, and is not to be lightly esteemed.

To her preachers, from the beginning hitherto, New England has been most indebted, under God, for her unrivalled advancement in civilization, her exalted character of intelligence, her correctness and propriety and strength of language, as well as her distinction in theology and morals. But no man can shut his eyes to the fact. that there has never been so great a degree of enlightened elevation among the people at large, nor so much of intellectual activity applied to all subjects and objects; and hence never so much of imperative demand for a high order of excellence in the general or ordinary character of the ministrations of the sanctuary. To such a state of things we must adapt ourselves, as best we may, by our diligence in study, and our increased watchfulness unto prayer. But, alas, are there not too many of us, who have no light reason to fear, that we study far less, because we pray the less? And if the study and the closet of all could here testify, would it not be said of more than one, in the lamenting confessions of another, that "want of private devotional reading and shortness of prayer, through incessant sermon-making, had produced strangeness between God and his soul!"

And, my beloved and respected brethren, why is it, that we so often seem to forget, that we stand between the living and the dead? It cannot, full well I know, be expected of any of Christ's ministers, that they should always be alike interested, earnest, powerful and impressive. But if we preach of heaven and hell, as "a stone speaking to stones," or if when redeeming love is our theme, we are as cold and passionless as the unquarried marble,—how can it be, that we commend the truth to any man's conscience, or how do we anything, as becometh us, that Christ may see of the travail

of his soul and be satisfied?

Yet must it be remembered, that no one has a commission to preach, as if in his own hands were "the keys of hell and of death," and it was for him to open or shut at his pleasure. And a sad blemish, if not a fearful sign of the inward spirit or interior life, it must be regarded in any man's preaching, who declaims of "the damnation of hell," as if sure of personal deliverance from the wrath to come, and cared little, except as affecting his place and emoluments, whether his hearers repented, or perished! Not so was he who ceased not to warn every man, day and night, with tears, and who always exercised himself to have a conscience void of offence, and so unremittingly watched over his remaining propensities of

corruption and liabilities of iniquity,-lest after having preached the

Gospel to others, he himself should be a castaway!

There are views that we might take of ourselves and our responsibilities, which, if long cherished and not counteracted, would seriously hinder us in our work, and greatly embitter our sweetest satisfactions. An example, if I do not much mistake, we have in that eminently holy young man, David Brainerd; so also in a marked degree, in the godly and devout Henry Martyn; not to speak of Payson and of others, whose praise is in all our churches. But may I say to my coævals, and more especially to my younger brethren, that, if we would have as heavenly a spirit as that of Payson, or of Martyn, or of Brainerd, and as close a walk with God,—with a cheerfulness and a loveliness unsurpassed in any whom we have ever known,—we may find a model with which many may do well to be more familiar. I refer to Robert Murray McCheyne, of the Free Church of Scotland, and who, not inappropriately, has been called the Henry Martyn of Scotland.

Perhaps some may have known of him only by that song of "Jehovah Tzidkenu," or "The Lord our Righteousness,"—a strain, which would seem to be pure and sweet enough for the holiest melodies of a blood-bought harp in heaven. Upon the beauty of his life unto Christ—amidst severe infirmities and most arduous toils,—there was no veil, and no tinge or shadow of sombre melancholy. He had joy in believing; and joy over many sinners repenting. "He dwelt while here below, far away from the damps that rise about Doubting Castle, and hard by the Beulah, where the sunlight ever falls." And why should not we—all of us,—and why not all here present with us, or associated with us, as "fellow-helpers to the truth,"—why should not we all be thus devoted,—be thus lovely and heavenly,—thus happy and rejoicing in the Lord

our Righteousness?

Young as he was, he was accustomed to seal his letters, with the impression of the sun going down behind the mountains, and the motto on it,—"The night cometh." Brethren, "the night cometh," very soon to some of us. But not too soon, for him who is ready and waiting for his Lord. Meanwhile, when so much can be attempted, and so much may be done by the faithful servant of the Son of God, in the very shortest term of active usefulness, at a period like that now passing; in a land whose far-distant west is but a hand's breadth from the Orient—a land of such providential loving-kindness, such ancestral renown, such amazing developments, hour by hour, and such wonders of magnificent and overpowering anticipation, in the accelerated coming of the future of prophecy and of hope;—O let each be valiant for the truth as in Jesus, until he shall hear the summons—"Come up hither and take thy crown!" Amen.

### XVI.

## THE SUFFERINGS AND THE GLORY.

# BY REV. GEORGE SHEPARD, PROFESSOR IN THE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, BANGOR, ME.

"For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."—Row. viii. 18.

THE apostle speaks in a similar strain in 2 Cor. iv. 17. "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far

more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

The present is a state of afflictions and trials. They fall somewhere; they come at some time. The apostle represents the entire world as in a burdened and suffering condition; not only Christians, but all men; not only the rational, but the irrational, and even the inanimate. "For we know," he says, "that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain until now: and not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our bodies." In the text, the apostle speaks of sufferings here, of a glory which shall be revealed in us, and of the comparison between the two.

I. Let us turn our minds, for a few moments, to the present sufferings, or the sufferings of this present time. There may be here a reference to the peculiar tribulations of Christians in that cruel and persecuting period. But the language is not confined to that period; for sufferings on the part of Christians, were not peculiar to that period; as has been remarked, they are the lot of all time.

In speaking of the sufferings of Christians, I shall first adduce those sufferings which are peculiar to the Christian character and experience. As the disciple of Christ, the renewed heart has joys with which the stranger intermeddleth not, so he has sorrows of

which the mere worldly mind has no experience.

His sufferings from the presence and workings of sin within him, are often keen; sometimes overwhelming. He is not yet wholly delivered from sin; but he hates it, and watches and prays against it, and if endowed with the spirit of his Master, he will resist it even unto blood. There is suffering in these conflicts—these wrestlings with the enemy; and if sin gets the advantage, as it sometimes will, and he is thrown down and defiled, there is greater

suffering still. David calls it the anguish of broken bones. More than this occasionally, even the bitter agony of a broken spirit,—all this, because he is a Christian of so high attainments, that sin

has become to him the greatest possible evil and offence.

The Christian sometimes suffers from the assaults of the adversary. We know that Christ's sufferings from this quarter were very great; none greater came upon him, except those connected with the scene of the crucifixion. As it was with the Master, so it will be with the disciple. The great enemy will assail him, and vex and worry, and turn for a season, even the springs of his hap-

piness into waters of wormwood.

There are sufferings to the Christian from an opposing, not to say persecuting world. The world does not love the pure gospel of Christ, the world hates it for its claims, its restrictions, its penalties; and those who have professed it, have in times past encountered all the ills human malice could dispense. They have had trials of cruel mockings and scourgings; yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonments. They have been stoned, they have been sawn asunder, tempted, slain with the sword. All the instruments and engines of death have been often employed, and their utmost capabilities in the work of torture have been exhausted upon the followers of the Lord Jesus. Multitudes in every period have tested the whole fearful meaning of the declaration, "we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God."

But there is a more refined persecution; it strikes not the body; the iron, in this case, enters the soul; there is the taunt, the sneer, the shaft of ridicule, the uttered blasphemy. Christ's saying has been verified in every period of the church, that a man's foes shall be they of his own household. And, perhaps, no suffering for the cause of Christ, can exceed the sufferings of those who cannot be Christians peaceably, with toleration at home; who have not only no sympathy there, in their best hopes and joys, but have even forfeited confidence, and are subjected to an outbreaking opposition and an unnatural hate from those most dear to them, simply because they love the Saviour, and profess and obey his gospel.

The Christian, in some instances, suffers intensely from the fluctuations of experience. The light is withdrawn from him, and hope is almost extinct, and there comes over him the dreary sense of the divine abandonment. He feels to some small extent as Christ when he exclaimed, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"—in some measure as David did, when he uttered those dismal interrogatives, "Will the Lord cast off forever? And will he be favorable no more? Is his mercy clean gone forever? Doth his promise fail forever more? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? Hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies?" And he may add with the psalmist, "This is my infirmity." It is, perhaps, his infirmity—a mysterious disease, reaching to the seats, and rudely sweeping all the chords of feeling; operating, in some instances, as an iron

shutter to all the windows of the soul, keeping from the imprisoned tenant every descending beam of day; so that everything wears a hue of gloom; the prayer attempted seems all heartless and scattering, a mockery to the great hearer of prayer; the hope once cherished, a baseless delusion; God appears only as awful in justice and holiness; Christ, only as the armed and avenging King; the Comforter, only as the grieved and banished spirit; death, the personification and embodiment of all conceivable terrors. Such the working of the infirmity. And who can tell the suffering in such a case? Who but the sufferer knows it?

There is another class of sufferings I will advert to; those of a worldly and providential nature. With these, the Christian is vis-

ited in common with the rest of mankind.

The Christian, equally with others, is exposed to the vicissitudes of the world; the defeating of earthly plans, the blasting of worldly hopes—to the evils and deep distresses of a remediless poverty.

Even Christ himself had not where to lay his head.

There are also the sufferings arising from sickness and decay. These, at some time and in some form, all must encounter. If any have lived years without feeling the wilting hand of disease upon them, let them be thankful, and not presume that it will long continue to be so with them. The Christian may have great consolation in the season of his visitation, but the visitation he must ordi-

narily receive; he may not hope to escape.

It has probably struck the attentive observer, that the Christian's sufferings, of a bodily nature, are often far greater than the sufferings of those who die in hardened impiety. Not unfrequently do we see the ungodly and profane, passing quietly out of life, having no bands in their death; whilst others, eminent for holiness, linger and wear out, by the simple force and process of tormenting pain. God's reasons for so doing, we will not now undertake to penetrate. It may be to show the power of godliness—the sustaining energy of the Christian's hope. It may be a discipline—the kindling of a fire to purge away the remaining dross of sin. It may, in part, be a chastisement; light strokes administered, in a momentary but corrective displeasure, for some offences or neglects which cannot be passed wholly by. Whatever the cause, the sufferings are sometimes great. The Christian's death-bed, while it may be a place of inward peace or positive triumph, the last struggles of a crowning victory, it may also be a place in which centre the sharpest piercings, and over which roll the heaviest billows of pain.

There are the sufferings also attendant on bereavement—the removal by death of beloved friends. The cords of attachment grow strong, and very closely bind heart to heart. The parental, the filial, the fraternal, the conjugal tie, seems to pass around often, and encompass every other joy; and when sundered, it is as though everything were taken. The circumstances, perhaps, all administer to the heart's deep anguish. He sank down among strangers;

he sleeps in a foreign grave, or on the coral bed. The Christian knows it is all wisely done; but he feels the cleaving stroke. And in the fresh intensity of his sorrow, in the first tumult of his grief, he realizes not the assuaging power of these divine considerations. He dwells only upon what he has lost. His memory recurs and fixes, with a mournful tenacity, upon those objects and thoughts which are the most perfectly adapted to harrow still more, the already torn and throbbing sensibilities. The room, the seat the loved one occupied; all the little arrangements as he left them; the books as he marked and laid them away; the garments where he hung them; the trees those hands did plant; the grounds those feet did tread—each is made to contribute its pang in this ministry of grief, till the heart can hold no more, till in its paroxysms it swells and heaves almost to bursting. Such the anguish of bereavement, sometimes, before religion has had time to soothe by its healing appliance.

I will not dwell longer upon the sufferings of this present time, nor go more into details. They are manifold and inevitable. We may be spared for a season, we cannot be perpetually. Sooner or later, each must take his share. A long forborne stroke is apt, when it comes, to be a repeated stroke. It is a world of change and of suffering; there are withered hearts and blighted hopes; friends parting; countenances changing; graves opening; tears flowing. There are the pains of the body, and the sorrows of the mind; the afflictions of life, and the bitter agonies of death; and the Christian drinks as often and as deeply of this cup as do others.

II. But let us turn away, in the second place, to that other and contrasted scene, the glory which shall be revealed in us. And what can we say here? The sufferings are matters of experience; the glory, only of faith; not yet revealed; indeed, it cannot be fully revealed. Our natures could bear no open manifestation. Mortal eve cannot behold, nor ear hear, nor heart conceive, the things which God has prepared for them that love him. Were it not so, mortal language would fail in its powers of communication. The spirit of inspiration makes some attempts to shadow forth the coming blessedness of the Christian. It is a glory that shall be revealed in us; a glory in the presence of God; the glorious liberty of the children of God; the riches of the glorious inheritance of the saints; an exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Here we come to Paul's magnificent and laboring utterance,—exploding language, as it were, by the swelling hugeness of the idea, -a greatness excessively exceeding,-a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; one of the strongest and most remarkable expressions ever penned or uttered. We are farther told of the life; the eternal life; the crown of life; a life hid with Christ in God; of an enduring substance; an immovable kingdom; a building not made with hands, eternal in the heavens; Christians are to walk in white; they are to reign with Christ; they are to have bodies fashioned like unto his glorious body. These various modes of description are obviously intended to set forth to our minds, as vividly as the nature of the case admits, that state of wonderful exaltation and happiness. That state is the Christian's sure possession; toward it he is borne on the rapid wing of time; a state in which there will be no sin; none of these sufferings and conflicts and bitter mournings; where all tears will be wiped away, all trials merged in triumphs,—a state of renewed intercourse with redeemed friends, and high companionship with saints and angels; a state of enlarging and striding knowledge, where we shall see as we are seen, and know as we are known; a state in which love will be perfected, and all pervading, and all blessing with its sweet and hallowed intensity. But why attempt to describe that state, that glory which shall be revealed, but not yet revealed; when all our attempts seem as nothing, and we can only retreat back upon Paul's doubled hyperbole, and gain a little relief to our conceptions, in the use of his masterly extravagance, crying out and wondering as we repeat—a

far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

III. Having considered some of the suffering here, and attempted to glance at the glory hereafter, we might pause long enough to institute a comparison between the two. But there is no comparison of a momentary sorrow, with an infinite and eternal joy. apostle thought so amid the heavy trials of his lot; burdened as he was, with an unwonted responsibility; carrying about with him that dread infirmity, the thorn in the flesh; surrounded with enemies, traduced, beaten, killed, all the day long; the sufferings were present and almost without a parallel in Christian endurance; the glory future, and apprehended only by faith. He weighed the matter; he calculated carefully; he balanced the account, and this was his settled judgment, I reckon; I account, that the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. And can any one hesitate in coming to the same conclusion? We might refer the question to one of far feebler faith, and in still deeper trouble; one, on whom the hand of affliction was pressing most heavily, and the glory seemed dim, and far away. Even such an one could not fail to utter the same judgment-not worthy to be compared; the affliction for a moment, the glory eternal; the affliction light, the glory unmeasured in weight and worth. Can the depressed and most sorrowing heart, hesitate in the judgment,-not worthy to be compared. Suppose we pass to the other side of the scale, and put the question to a higher reference; to one of those spirits before the throne, who have come out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Be the umpire one who encountered every form and variety of earthly trial; the direst malignancy of persecution; the most desolating strokes of bereavement; the tortures of a racked and groaning body; and the still keener anguish of a wounded spirit. That spirit, thus tossed and troubled, is now resting in the embrace of infinite and protecting love. That heart which at times drooped beneath the weight of its sorrows, now swells with the fulness of unutterable joys. It has felt its last pang; now it is perfect peace. Thus that purified intelligence has tried both sides; has had experience of the worst griefs of time, and of the commenced and growing blessedness of eternity. Ask him his judgment; and what, think you, he would say, as he looked back upon this little point and speck of trouble, and as he thought of the immeasurable felicities of his present and secured immortality? What would he say? He would say with the utmost reach of language and strength of emphasis, and all the redeemed would join in and peal forth their intense agreement, till those eternal pillars should tremble with the utterance—NOT WORTHY TO BE COMPARED.

IV. But, though there is no comparison, there is a connection, between the present suffering and the future glory. Allow me in a remark or two upon this connection—the beneficent nature and working of it. We see in it the blessed hand of God, here as everywhere, bringing good out of evil; taking from the very jaws and bowels of sorrow, a shining tribute of joy; all things, all trials made to work for good. These afflictions, when the mind comes out from them ascendant, work into the character an element of strength and assurance, a conscious supremacy over the assailments of trial and evil; producing a character that has met the storm, and now firmer stands for the blasts it has successfully sustained—a character refined and made purer by the fire, and more shining from the rough and hard attritions. These light afflictions, by working these things in us, work out for us that far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; weightier for these light afflictions.

In this way, this view, the future glory gives strength to bear the present trial. That future glory-let it shine back and put to shame and silence every rising murmur. If ever tempted to say, or even feel, that God is unkind in putting upon you so great a trial, as you seem doomed to carry, pause long enough to think of the glory; and especially of the sacrifices He has made to open your path unto it. God unkind, because he did not spare you that visitation, when he spared not his own Son, but gave him up freely for us all? God unkind in the discipline he employs to cleanse your soul and fit it for that high state? Look up and think at once of what he has prepared and done, and you will discover in all, nothing but a father's solicitude and an overflowing goodness. If ever ready to faint or give over, saying, all these things are against me; every event an adversity; every new scene a trial; remember still to look up and think of the glory, and gather from above strength and courage, and so hold on your way, ever struggling to reach the goal and gain the prize. Then all these things you here so much dread, will prove helpers to your deliveranceadded gems in your crown.

Another thing is here suggested, namely, while the future glory gives strength to bear the present trial, the present trial in turn will heighten the fruition of the future glory. I have said, no comparison can be instituted; but there is a contrast which the delivered soul will feel, and which will fill it with wonder-so sudden, so perfect. Mark that weary disciple, who had a long and severe discipline, and a sorrowing experience; whose sensibilities were mostly ministers of pain; whose clayey tabernacle was often turned into a prison by thick and brooding infirmities; who realized little faith and frequent fears—conflicts, doubts, sufferings, for years his bosom companions, till he seems to cleave to them, as though they were his inheritance. The hour of redemption at length arrives: the submerging waters are passed: and in an instant, the celestial glory stands all revealed. As the darkness settles heavily here, the light opens transportingly there; and as the body is sending out the last moaning sounds of death, the spirit begins to hear and even join in those heavenly melodies. To such an one-to one coming out of that tribulation, rising above those billows, parting forever with those pains and glooms and labors, but remembering them all: how refreshing must be that rest; how sweet that peace; how glorious that triumph; how immeasurably heightened all that joyous possession and experience by the scenes which have been gone through. We are lost here: we know but little. Blessed shall we be, if we reach that state, and learn by experience the riches and the mysteries of its glory.

We see here the firm ground for the grace of patience; and how lovely is this grace; how important that we possess it; that it grow strong; that there be put into it firm nerves and sinews, so that we be able to bear the afflictions we cannot shun; not only the momentary, but those wearying burdens, which can only be laid down with the burden of our mortality. Happy those who thus endure to the end, and show, through all, the patience of the saints.

Let me say, finally, if these are light afflictions, these joys of sense are also light joys; these are shadowy and vain possessions. How low and mean, to be the great object of pursuit to one made in the image and for the service of God; and how these things must look in the retrospect of a lost eternity! If lost, you will see them then as the price of your soul. You will know that you bartered heaven for that now perished baseness. You will behold it in the distance, a floating trifle, a receding speck of dirt; and yet it was the price of your soul. Let me remind you that soon you will leave the little things, the gildings, the baubles, and the vanities, and go forth to the substantial, the infinite, the eternal. Awake! watch! strive! or this lying world will work for you, and lay upon you a dreadful burden; the burden of your Maker's curse, because you would not hear his counsel, and embrace his Son. You will lie under it forever—a far more exceeding and eternal weight of misery.

### XVII.

### THE DOCTRINE OF THE CROSS THE POWER OF GOD.\*

### BY REV. NOAH PORTER, D.D.

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"For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish, foolishness, but unto us which are saved, it is the power of God."—1 Con. 1. 18.

This is the language of triumph. It is an appeal of the apostle to those who had been the witnesses and the subjects of his labors. that the preaching, or rather the doctrine, of the cross, was doing that for men which all the wisdom of the world had failed to do, and in comparison of which all things beside were unimportant. It was morally renovating and saving them-saving them from the power of sin and the misery of the second death: and so, to those who came under its influence, despised though it was by such as neglected it, and lay perishing in their sin, it was distinctively and demonstrably the power of God. "Where is the wise?" he proceeds to say, "where is the reviler? where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God."

The doctrine of the cross to them that are saved is the power of God. In illustration of this, I would show what is the doctrine of the cross, and how this doctrine, to them that are saved, is the

power of God.

SR.

I. What is the doctrine of the cross. As explained by the apostle, it is the doctrine of "Christ crucified." It is not, however, a mere history of his crucifixion; for this, taken separately from its relations, and import, would have no such efficacy as is attributed to the doctrine. Thousands of men have been crucified who have lived unknown and died unfelt. Nor does it refer to the suf-

<sup>\*</sup> Preached at the annual meeting of the General Association of Connecticut, June 18th, 1850, and published at their request.

ferings of Christ on the cross, exclusively of his previous sufferings; but to his sufferings and humiliation, generally designated by the cross as having been consummated in the cross: nor yet are these to be taken exclusively of his obedience, for having been voluntarily endured, they implied obedience of the highest character. The doctrine of the cross is the scheme of doctrine concerning "Christ crucified" generally; and, among other particulars essential to it, these two are especially important—the peculiarity of his person, and the main end of his death. It is to the last of these more par-

ticularly that I invite your attention.

Assuming that Paul preached "Christ crucified" as being God incarnate, "of the seed of David according to the flesh," and "the Son of God according to the spirit of holiness," "God manifest in the flesh," I would show that, in respect to the main end of his death, the doctrine of the cross as preached by him is the doctrine of the atonement: that is, that Christ died, not as a martyr only, sealing his testimony with his blood; nor as an example only, leading the way to God, and encouraging us through suffering and shame, to follow him; nor only as an impressive manifestation of God in himself to bring us to repentance, and through our repentance procure our justification before the eternal throne,—but as an expiatory sacrifice freely offered to God, and, as such, the ground of our justification, on our believing in him for that vital benefit.

He who was in the beginning with God and was God, was made flesh and dwelt among us. Seeing the race perishing in apostasy from God, he appeared for our deliverance; he became one of us; he united himself to the race in its fallen state; cast in his lot with us; was made under the law as we are; was subject to its curse in respect to the evils of life and the suffering of death, in common with us; and, joining himself to us in the experience of a common lot, he was joined to us also in the tenderest sympathy: "took upon him our infirmities and carried our sorrows," in the feeling of our burdens, superadded to sufferings of his own; entered into the depths of our woe with a sensibility heightened by the purity that was pained at the sense of our sin, as well as the benevolence which shared the sense of our sufferings. are the toil, sorrow, and death, to which we are subject, to be regarded as divine inflictions for sin, and in this sense penal, however through grace, they have a disciplinary use? Is it so, as Moses, "the man of God," in his memorable "prayer," said, that "we are consumed by his anger, and by his wrath we are troubled?" And to this dread lot was Christ subjected, although himself was not only sinless, but divine, coming among us for our redemption. Could there be no exemption for him—no mitigation of the curse? but, on the contrary, did it fall on him, interposing himself for our protection in all its terribleness? so that his visage was more marred than any man's, and his form more than the sons of men? in a world of sorrows, signalized as a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief? And when, beside the sufferings incident to humanity by the necessity of its condition, he was subject to all manner of abuse from the malignity of men, was there no voice from heaven for his vindication, and no legion of angels for his rescue? And when in immediate prospect of the last dreadful scene he prayed that if it were possible the cup might pass from him, was it not possible? And when forsaken of human sympathy, and given up to the will of his enemies to be mocked and crucified, was he also forsaken of God? and even when God was challenged by his crucifiers to deliver him, if he would have him, would he not deliver him? Must the dread sentence proceed with unbending severity until he who was the Prince of life bowed his head in death? And was all this ordained of God, as holy men, divinely inspired, had foretold, "to make reconciliation for iniquity, and bring in everlasting righteousness?" or as Paul says, "to declare the righteousness of God for the remission of sins, that he might be just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." Then I say, and this is what I mean when I say that Christ died to make atonement for sin—the sins of the world—he died that we might live, not merely to bring us to repentance, but to make repentance availing for our forgiveness; or in the language of Butler, "put us into a capacity of escaping future punishment, and obtaining future happiness." I would not say that Christ suffered the wrath of God. He was, and he could not but know that he was, God's well-beloved Son, but he was one of us, "all whose days are passed away in his wrath." I would not say that he suffered the penalty of the divine law,-this comprehends the eternal as well as temporal consequences of sin,-but he did suffer, and that in great measure, those temporal sufferings, which, coming on us, are penal. They were not punishment as appointed to him, punishment is evil inflicted on the guilty,—but they were appointed to him, and most freely borne as the divinely constituted substitute for the punishment due to us, to answer its end, and remove the necessity of its infliction on our return to God by him. They were not such, either in kind or degree, as those must endure whose end is to be punished; but they were great and dreadful, beyond all other experience in the present life. The sufferings of the cross were dreadful, and to those were added mental sufferings, more so. I cannot enter into the mystery of his agony in the garden, or of his complaint on the cross. I can imagine him to have suffered as none but one who loved as he did could suffer; under his sense of the ingratitude and malignity of men, I can imagine him under his own burden to have had an overwhelming sense of ours. I see him troubled in spirit at the grave of Lazarus. I see him weep. I hear him groan. It was in sympathy with the griefs, and in view of the death, the corruption, and the grave, which sin had caused in the world; and, when in the garden he had in prospect, and on the cross the experience, of his own sufferings for sin, I imagine his sympathy, with a world of sinners sinking under the wrath of God into everlasting woe, to have been moved to its utmost depths. know, too, that there is such a thing as the hiding of God's face: and that to those who love him, it gives pain which they alone can understand and feel: I can suppose this, in the experience of Jesus, to have occasioned a horror of darkness which "the only begotten of the Father" alone could experience. Still I regard the subject as involved in mystery, knowing only that his sufferings were inconceivably great. It is not, however, to the greatness of his sufferings, so much as the greatness of the sufferer, that the Scriptures ascribe the efficacy of his death as a propitiatory sacrifice. "How much more," says Paul, "shall the blood of Christ, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot unto God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" It was saying much to speak of our great High Priest as "offering himself unto God." It was saying more to speak of him as offering "himself unto God without spot." But when he proceeds to declare who he was that offered himself; when he proceeds to say that he was not a man only, but also the eternal God: that his offering of himself was through, or by, "the eternal Spirit," well might he make the appeal: and we tremble and rejoice to hear it, "How much more?" If the dignity of the sufferer and his relation to God, could be of any account at all, in the adequateness of his sufferings as a substitute for the punishment of a rebel. world, what limit can there be to the efficacy of his death for this end, who was not only one of the world, but also the world's Creator and Lord?

That this is the doctrine of the cross, as it was preached by Paul,

appears-

1. From the importance which he attaches to the cross. Preaching the cross was in his view preaching the gospel. The cross was his constant, and, in a sense, his only theme,—the beginning and end, the sum and substance of his teachings; all deriving from this their distinctive character. The same importance is attributed to the cross in the other Scriptures. This was the great object of the Jewish ritual. As the apostle remarks, all things are by the law purged with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no remission; and the end of these explations he declares to have been the foreshadowing of the great sacrifice in the death of This was the object to which the spirit of inspiration turned the gazing eyes of the ancient prophets. The scene which excited their most eager inquiries as the Spirit opened to them the curtain of futurity, was "the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow." This was the theme on which Moses and Elias, the giver of the law and the chief of the prophets, appearing in glory with our Saviour on the Mount of Transfiguration, held converse with him. They "spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem." This, in its relation to his subsequent reign, is also the object of the angels' intent regard. "Which things the angels desire to look into." And this is the subject of the everlasting song of the redeemed, "Worthy," they cry, "is the Lamb that was slain." Now, regarding the cross as the symbol of the atonement, we see a manifest reason for all this. We see in it an importance answerable to the surpassing interest which the worshippers of God in heaven and on earth have felt in it. On this peculiarly hang the hopes of a dying world. This is the central point of the Christian system, its peculiarity and its glory—that which distinguishes it from all else that is called religion—all else that is called Christianity. Take away the expiatory character of the cross, and you attach, importance it may be, but no peculiar importance to it; you attribute to it nothing distinctive; you make the preaching of Christ crucified in no other sense than as you make the preaching of Christ our teacher, or

Christ our example, the preaching of the gospel.

2. That this is the doctrine of the cross, as it was preached by Paul, appears from its being foolishness to them that perish. There is nothing foolish—nothing incredible or strange—in the doctrine of a martyr's death. Such a death well accords with the history of human depravity; and, when suffered with fortitude and meekness, is honorable. Were the doctrine of the cross only the doctrine that Jesus died as a martyr or a reformer, it would be regarded by all men with admiration. Rousseau himself, so regarding it, said, "If Socrates died as a philosopher, Jesus Christ died as a God." But the doctrine of the atonement involves considerations which the unbelieving world do not appreciate. It contemplates mankind as sinners, as transgressors of the law of God; and condemns to eternal death. It supposes the law which condemns them to be just and good, the penalty no less just and good than the precept; and God, the infinitely just and benevolent Judge of all, bent on the execution of the one, to maintain the authority of the other, except as the end might be otherwise attained. It declares that end to be attained by the cross in the pardon of the penitent; and calls on men accordingly to return to God by it, acknowledging their iniquity, submitting themselves to his law, and casting themselves on his mercy in Christ for the justification of life. Now it is easy to see that to those who are convinced of sin, this doctrine is the wisdom of God. They see an occasion for the stupendous provision, and an answerableness in the provision to the occasion, glorious alike to his justice and his mercy. But mankind in their natural blindness, do not see the doctrine in this light. tion from which they view it, is not that of sinners self-condemned; and, therefore, "to them that perish, it is foolishness."

3. That this is the doctrine of the cross as preached by Paul, appears from his more explicit account of it in other passages. To only a few of these can I now refer you. Paul preached that Christ died for our sins. "Scarcely for a righteous man will one

die,-peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die." Here you will remark the supposition is that of a man's dying not only in behalf, but instead of another; as David, in his grief for Absalom, said, "Would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son!" Such, therefore, is the meaning, when, in carrying out the contrast, Paul says, "But God commendeth his love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, in due time Christ died for us." The vicarious principle is asserted here. But Paul preached not only that Christ died for us, but that he died for our sins. delivered unto you, first of all," he says to the Corinthians, "that which I also received,—how that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures." A person dies for his own sins, when he suffers death in punishment of them. Christ died for our sins, as he died to save us from that punishment. Our sins made it necessary that either he or we ourselves should die. He suffered the death of the cross for them that we might not suffer death eternal. Paul preached also more expressly that Christ died in order that we might be forgiven. "In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins." "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare the righteousness of God for the remission of sins." Forgiveness of sins, is remission of the punishment of them. As Christ died for the forgiveness, or remission of sins, he died to save us from the punishment which we have incurred by them. And, yet more significantly of this, he preached that Christ died a sin-offering, died a sacrifice to God for our sins. "Now once, in the end of the world, hath he appeared to put away sin, by the sacrifice of himself." "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many." It is not necessary to understand this in the most literal sense. There is no doubt a great difference between an altar and the cross, and the office of the high priest in the temple and that of the Roman soldiers on Calvary; but, in effect, Christ was at once our high priest, our altar, and our sacrifice. His death was not only violent, but it was voluntary; he offered himself: and how Paul and the Hebrews to whom he wrote understood this, there can be no doubt. The allusion to the expiatory offerings of the temple points us to the expiatory nature and design of the offering of Christ. I will add, only, that, according to the preaching of Paul, Christ died to reconcile us to God, "All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself, by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself." This means not so directly that God is bringing the world into submission to his government, as that He is administering his government placably to the world; for this is the explanation subjoined, "not imputing their trespasses to them," -not setting these in the account as an obstacle to their peace with him,-proclaiming a general amnesty to the world on the condition of its submission to him. This relation of God to the world,

the apostle asserts, is in, or by Christ, and not only so, but it is by his death as a propitiatory sacrifice,—it being immediately added as the ground of the wonderful procedure,—"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." A mutual peace,—a reciprocal love between God and a rebellious world, no doubt is the reconciliation intended; but the basis of it is, the pacification of God towards the world by the blood of the cross; not, indeed, as implying any original implacableness of his nature, but only an obstacle to the exercise of forgiving mercy, resulting from the necessity of some decisive testimony of his abhorrence of sin, which necessity by the sacrifice of Christ is removed. Such being the doctrine of the cross, I proceed to show—

II. How this doctrine to them that are saved is the power

of God.

"Saved," in this connection, means, primarily, renewed in holiness. The comparison is between the doctrine of the cross and the wisdom of this world in their effects on character. Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? What have they done to turn men from sin? "Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?" Hath he not exposed it as vain and futile? "For after that the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe." This is meeting the adversaries of the gospel on their own ground. They insist that the doctrine of the cross relaxes moral obligation,—that the pretence of turning men from sin by the proclamation of a free pardon is absurd,—that the supposition of God's making his beloved Son a substitute for the guilty in the suffering of death, for purposes of moral government, is foolishness. No, says the apostle, facts prove the contrary. Go where you will,—over the Jewish world or the pagan,—in the path of the preaching of the cross, and you will find it to those who yield themselves to its appropriate influence, the power of God. In its effects on character you will see incontestable evidence that this foolishness of God is wiser than men, and this weakness of God is stronger than men.

Yet the apostle could not have meant to say, that the doctrine of the cross is effectual to this end without the Holy Spirit, or, which is the same thing in a modern form, that this doctrine, being given by the Holy Spirit, is itself the only divine power designated in the Scriptures under that name; for in this very epistle, he expressly distinguishes the word of the Spirit from the person of the Spirit, and asserts that the former without the latter—the preaching the cross without the direct influence of God upon the mind—is ineffectual. Though Paul plant and Apollos water, all is vain without

the Spirit's inworking.

But, on the other hand, Paul speaks of the gospel itself as being, not inert, but quick and powerful,—not a dead letter, but a living

principle,—through the grace of the Holy Spirit opening the mind to receive it, a divine energy,—the divinely adapted and divinely powerful means of raising dead souls to a holy and spiritual life, and of sustaining and strengthening in them that life to their complete and eternal salvation. Nor does he merely say, that the gospel in general, but the doctrine of the cross in particular, is the power of God; the doctrine which points us to the expiatory sacrifice of Christ for justification, is also, and on that account, the means of our sanctification; the doctrine which alone gives peace to the burdened conscience, gives purity to the believing heart,the doctrine which offers a free pardon to the vilest of sinners, associates their sins, on their cordially receiving it, with the deepest abhorrence of their souls,—the doctrine which brings to the heart of the very adulteress, the accents of a bleeding Saviour, "Neither do I condemn thee," brings to her the warning also of the Almighty Judge, "Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon thee." It is the only doctrine which is effectual to this end, and so, in contrast with all human schemes of salvation, is the power of God and the wisdom of God.

All this is before the world as historic verity. The doctrine of the cross has been, and is in fact to them that are saved, the power of God. It was such in the days of the apostles. Myriads, where it was preached, in Jewish lands or in pagan, it powerfully convinced of sin, and melted in contrition; it made joyful in the knowledge of forgiveness, and turned from all iniquity in love to their great Redeemer; it called out from the world in profession of his name, and emboldened in his cause in the face of persecution; it joined together in firm fellowship, and carried forward

triumphant over all opposition in a new and holy life.

In the reformation of the sixteenth century, the same doctrine wrought with the same power. It was this which gave peace to the troubled soul of Martin Luther in the monastery of Erfurt; and which, imparting to him the peace, was also to him the power of God; and through him to many thousands, all over Europe, to whom, by his preaching and his writings, the doctrine came. It is this which stands first among the causes which have given to reformed nations since the elevation which they have possessed; which is the vital principle of the many thousands of evangelical churches in these nations; and, to them that are saved in these churches, is consciously as life from the dead, and through them is spreading light and life into all quarters of the world. Go to listening assemblies, where this doctrine is having its appropriate effect. What is it but the power of God which causes that breathless silence,—that unutterable emotion,—that heart-piercing conviction,—that absorbing inquiry,—that obedient surrendering, that joy in God, which force the witnesses of the scene to say, "Surely God is in this place," and to those who gladly receive the word, make the hour the era of a new and holy life? Or what is it but the power of God that constrains so many of the subjects of this grace to break away from their country and friends, that they may convey to the perishing the salvation which they have found; that sustains them in a patient and cheerful prosecution of their work under all privations and sufferings; and that, by their means, raises up degraded bushmen and ferocious cannibals into an honorable' standing among the enlightened nations of the world? If it is by the power of God that these things are done, it is also by the power of the cross. It is this which directly and consciously operates on the sensibilities and active principles of the soul, quickened by the spirit of life; and to this alone, as connected with the agencies and means of its application, is the effect to be ascribed. The doctrine of the cross, in distinction from other means of moral culture, other schemes of religion, and other doctrines called Christian, is in fact the power of God in the moral renovation ting to the utte

As such is the fact, so it is not difficult to show, from the moral constitution of men, that such is the appropriate result. The doctrine of the cross peculiarly is adapted to the effect:—

1. Revealing God as having united himself to our nature, and for our salvation, it brings him near. No need have we of the sensible forms and gorgeous rites of pagan or papal idolatry,—no need of the symbols of the ancient dispensation, the shechinah, the mercy-seat, the temple,—to bring out the Eternal from the secrecy of his invisible abode, make him present to our apprehensions, or impress us with his personal agency around and within us, or his claims to our affection and worship. Standing around the cross, and believing in him who hangs bleeding there as "very God and very man," and seeing him thence ascending, consecrated by sufferings, as "the author of eternal salvation to all those that obey him," it is not difficult for us to feel that he is near us, and mindful of us, that he condescends to our mean estate, though offended at our sin; and that with him is our great concern, and with the invisible God in and through him.

2. Revealing the holiness of God, and vindicating the claims of his law, it rouses the conscience, and convinces of sin. It was not for creatures of a day, nor for unoffending subjects of God, nor for sinners but slightly guilty, that Christ, the Son of God, died an atoning sacrifice. No! if Christ died for all, then were all dead; and every bleeding wound and dying groan proclaims to every living man, that all things here are infinitely insignificant in comparison with an interest in his redemption. For if these things were done in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry? If God would forgive sin through no inferior sacrifice; if he who was in the form of God, and counted it no robbery to be equal with God, must have made himself of no reputation, and taken the form of a servant, and became obedient unto death, that penitent sinners might be forgiven,—then sin is no light thing in the view of God;

then is our God not only a loving Father but a righteous Judge; then can no riches of his goodness secure to favor those whom justice demands for punishment; and then will the punishment of those who die in impenitence, under the guilt of rejecting his grace superadded to that of refusing his authority, be alike certain and dreadful.

3. Revealing the forgiving mercy of God, in harmony with his punitive justice, it pacifies the conscience and melts the hearts of those who cordially believe in it. It brings them to the throne of grace, confessing their sins; assures them that he who gave his Son to die for them when enemies, will not reject them coming to him reconciled; that in pardoning them through his blood, there is no sacrifice of righteousness; that his justice itself has no pleasure in their death, and asks only that the law be sustained in their forgiveness, and that, satisfied with the honor done it in Christ, it sits partner with mercy in forgiving and saving to the uttermost all who come unto God by him. No matter how great is their guilt, no matter how absolute their conscious destitution of righteousness, and their despair of working out any, they are made welcome as though they were like the angels; for the righteousness of God is unto and upon all them that believe, with no difference. And this it is that melts the heart while it tranquillizes the conscience,—dissolves it in penitence under the sense of sins so great freely forgiven. You have heard the story of the poor ignorant Greenlanders, whe, as the missionaries told them of the power and Godhead of the Creator, turned away with stupid indifference; but when pointed to the cross, were softened and subdued. So it is everywhere. The goodness of God leadeth us to repentance; and where is the goodness of God seen as on the cross, pardoning sins so great as to require such an expiation?

Finally,—bringing us into peace with God, awakening delight in him, and gratitude to him, it transforms us after his image. We love him because he first loved us. Knowing and believing the love which he hath toward us, we admire what we see, and would be what we admire; we love as we are loved; we forgive as we are forgiven; the same mind is in us which was in Christ Jesus. We look not every one on his own things, but every one also on the things of others, and very specially on the condition of lost souls, and desire their fellowship with us in the great salvation. "The love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto

him that died for them and rose again."
In conclusion, I remark.—

1. The doctrine of the atonement is fundamental in the Christian system. The preaching of this doctrine is indispensable to the preaching of the gospel, and belief in it, to believing unto salva-

tion. Preaching Christ merely as our teacher, or as our example, or as sealing his testimony with his own blood, or as the brightest manifestation of the love of God, is not preaching the cross, and will not answer the end of the preaching of the cross. It will not save men. It may move the sensibilities, but it will not awaken the conscience or subdue the will. Nor will it heal the wounds of the contrite, or enthrone Christ in hearts devoted to the world. Jesus died, and died for us. He who was in the form of God, and counted it no robbery to be equal with God, took upon him our griefs and carried our sorrows; he whose throne is forever and ever, and whom all the angels of God do worship, took part with us in flesh and blood, that through death he might save us from death. This is the only doctrine that can at once awaken and tranquillize the conscience; subdue and constrain the will; produce in souls alienated from God the images of his holiness, and through them reproduce in others the same images to his glory. Ye who would be saved, ye who feel the power of sin, and are striving in vain for deliverance, hearken to him who from the cross proclaims. "Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth." That is the only object, the view of which can change the slave into a child,—the rebel into a friend.

2. The doctrine of the cross is a doctrine of great simplicity. Christ died for us. He died for our sins,-the just for the unjust. He redeemed us by his blood,-redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us. Such is the doctrine as it lies in the Scriptures. A child may understand it, though it involves relations into which angels look. The child, whose heart is opened to it, does understand it, and feels its power; so does the Greenlander and Hottentot, and is saved by it,-weeps and prays, and hopes, and loves, and rejoices, in the light of the glory of God, which shines upon him from it. But men have adopted other forms They have said that our sins were imputed to Christ,-that he was punished for them,-that he suffered the wrath of God on account of them,-that he suffered the curse of the law in our stead,—that his sufferings and death were the penalty of the law for our sins,-that he suffered and died to satisfy divine justice,—to satisfy and cancel the penal demands of the By such forms men would explain what God has not explained, or would distinguish their own views, the one from the other, of what they suppose that he has revealed. some, even all these may be understood in accordance with the doctrine as it lies in the Scriptures; but they may be, and sometimes are, understood in a way that corrupts and perverts it; and this at least is certain, that whatever is peculiar to them is not the power of God in saving those who hold to it, as is demonstrable from the fact, those who are saved are not agreed in them. Luther, and Baxter, and Edwards, in preaching the doctrine, employed different forms of statement, while they all preached the doctrine itself; and to themselves, and those who heard them, it was the

power of God.

Brethren, how peculiarly it becomes us as preachers of the cross. proclaiming our own dependence on the infinite sacrifice, to be tolerant towards each other, united in the same faith, differ though we may in cherished forms of statement; and the more especially. since it is not by any doctrinal belief or doctrinal preaching, without its appropriate influence in our hearts, that we shall ourselves be saved, or can expect to save others. The kingdom of God is not in word, but in power. It has not been by any merely verbal statements made with logical exactness, settled in councils, inscribed on parchments, and deposited in ecclesiastical archives, that the doctrine of the cross has come down to us through generations buried in dust; but it has been through souls, in all these generations, made alive to God and the concern of salvation by its power; and it must be by our own experience of that power, "working in us mightily," if, when we lie sleeping in dust, it will have saved us, and, through us, been transmitted to those who will succeed us, and spread abroad for the salvation of a dving world. The doctrine is important,—is indispensable as the medium of communication with its object—the true doctrine of the cross, and not another under the name; but woe to us if we rest in the doctrine; if we look not through the doctrine to the object; if we communicate not with it in the deep sympathies, and fervent aspirations, and applications of our inner man; if we give it not its appropriate place in our hearts; if we live not upon it, the life of godliness; if it be not in us, in the matter of our salvation, the power of God.

My brethren, it is a blessed privilege to be preachers of the cross,—to dwell around the cross, as David desired, like the priests of old time, to dwell always in the house of the Lord,—but to be also living examples of the efficacy of the cross, and preachers of it in churches, where, through us, its efficacy is conspicuous; and in view of what it has wrought in ourselves and in these, to be able to say to a perishing world,—See what it has done! to us who are saved it is the power of God,—to what higher blessedness

could a sinful mortal aspire?

Brethren, I am happy to meet you on this occasion. Almost all whom I used to greet in these fraternal assemblings are gone. In the prospect of soon following them, I rejoice to know that the preaching of the cross will not cease, but, as it is now shedding heavenly glory over benighted nations, so, at no distant period, it will be known and acknowledged, by all our perishing race, as the power of God unto salvation.—Amen.

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# GOD'S VOICE TO THE NATION.\*

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# BY REV. A. B. VAN ZANDT,

PASTOR OF THE TABB STREET PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, PETERSBURG, VA.

"Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils; for wherein is he to be accounted of ?"—

I salan il. 22.

THE world has nothing to fear from any degree of influence which the ministry may attain, and the cry of priestcraft will become obsolete, or at least unmeaning, so long as the Pulpit is confined to its legitimate themes. The sacred office was for ever dissevered from the strifes of politics and of parties, by that declaration of the Master at the bar of Pilate: "My kingdom is not of this world." Fully asserting his regal character, he yet exalted his mission, and the mission of his ambassadors, far above the petty conflicts of a secular ambition. Preferring himself the crown of thorns to the imperial diadem, and the robes of sepulture to the robes of state, he has also taught us, from the stand-point of his cross, to look down upon all the factitious distinctions of life, and to regard all mankind alike, as sinners to be saved or lost. The end of his coming into the world, and the end of our office, have respect to man as a spiritual being. We are called to study the diversities of his temporal condition, only as they bear upon his present character and his eternal prospects. And though not blind to the essential differences among men, yet unswayed by these, our faith must equally discern beneath the tinsel of rank, the insignia of power, and the rags of beggary, a guilty immortal spirit. The high argument of that spirit's loss and recovery carries us far beyond and above the range of topics suited to the Senate and the Forum; and instead of aiming to concentrate and sway popular opinion upon the agitating questions of human interest and policy, it is the office of the Pulpit to withdraw the minds of men to the transcendent interests of eternity, to the thoughts of God, and to the sublime economy of Redemption.

Our own country is a happy illustration of the truth, that governments have least to fear from clerical interference or priestly usurpation, when the Pulpit is left to the free and untrammelled

A sermon occasioned by the death of Zachary Taylor, President of the United States.

exercise of its functions. It is where the Church has been drawn into an unholy alliance with the State; where it has been degraded into a mere appendage to temporal power; or has ingloriously consented to be subsidized by and dependent upon governmental patronage, that with the loss of its spiritual and heaven-born dignity, it has sought to cover itself with the robes of secular power, and the tinsel of earthly aggrandizement. Yet, even then, the degradation which would hide itself beneath the unseemly habiliments of external grandeur, has been induced in the first instance by the encroachments of the civil upon the ecclesiastical power, and not by any inherent tendencies in the latter. With all due allowance for that personal ambition, from which even the purest minds are not exempt, and the influence of which has always been felt upon the ministry, as well as upon all other classes of men, yet the desire "to be greatest" never would have drawn the sacred office as a party into the arena of political strife, but for the seductive influences of the State itself, alternately bribing and coercing the Church to a participation in her conflicts. The mitre had never been joined with the sceptre, but that the regal first laid its hand upon the sacerdotal office, and sought to add another jewel to its crown, by arrogating the prerogative of

Christ—the headship of the Church.

It is a history which deserves to be studied by those who would cloak their carnal enmity to the gospel under the witless and wornout cry of "priestcraft,"-the record of the origin and progress of that hated and hateful union of Church and State. Side by side with that record let them study the relation of these two, which have so long been unjustly regarded as antagonist powers, as that relation exists in our own country. The ministry have here no civil power. Their profession is in many States a disqualification for office. They are nowhere pensioners upon the public purse. Precluded from the hopes of preferment, they have no temptation to a fulsome adulation of the great. Exempt from all civil and secular interference with their office, they need not connive at wickedness in high places, or withhold the sternest sanctions of the truth from any who may come under its rebukes. And yet in no country in the world has the sacred office a more extended and legitimate influence over the people than in this; whilst, at the same time, we may appeal to facts when we assert, that in no country in the world is it so entirely free from the charge of mingling and meddling in questions foreign to the great end of its institution! Individual exceptions there may be, of those who have mistaken their calling, and have carried into the pulpit the language and spirit of the hustings. But we aver, without fear of contradiction, that in the discharge of its peculiar duties, and the utterance of the simple truths of the Bible, the ministry of this land has thrown around its rulers the surest guarantee of public respect for their persons and offices; has given to law its strongest hold upon the citizen; and among conservative influences has been

second only to the Gospel which it proclaims.

If we thus magnify our office, it is to dispel the prejudices of those whose unwarranted and injurious suspicions are a barrier to the entrance of the truth. But whilst on the one hand thus fully conceding its limitations, on the other hand the occasion requires us to assert for the Pulpit a wider range of discussion than some are willing to allow. Its utterances are not to be confined to a few familiar and fundamental truths. Neither the teachings of the Master, the example of the Apostles, nor the spirit and design of our office, require us to be silent upon the moral and religious aspects of the great questions and events which may agitate communities and nations. Religion claims, and was designed to extend, a healthful influence over man in every stage of his history, and in all the relations of life. She greets with her blessing his entrance into the world, and clusters around the cradle of his infancy the associations and the hopes of an immortal life. She is charged with the culture and discipline of his youthful powers. She meets him at the opening of the world's active scenes with her monitory voice, and pointing to the highway of sin and folly, strewed with the wrecks of blighted hopes; the while with inspiriting words, she seeks to waken in his soul the noble purpose to tread the path of virtuous endeavor. When man would smooth that rugged path and sweeten its sorrows by the endearments of domestic life, Religion lends her sanction to the union of willing hearts, and leaves her benediction on their joys. In the chamber of sickness her presence is the harbinger of hope. She has her consolation for the hour of trial, and beside the bed of death she whispers the name of Jesus and the resurrection. But preparing him thus for his duties and his destiny, Religion has also her lessons for man as a citizen. Hers is the true philosophy which unfolds the origin and the nature of the social compact. From the fountain of unerring truth, she declares the just authority of governments, and the relations of the governed. Enforcing upon rulers a due sense of solemn responsibility, she enforces equally upon the ruled the maxims of a loyal obedience to the laws, and upon all, a constant recognition of Him, who rules among the nations, and whose Providence none can withstand.

An occasional recurrence to topics like these, with a view to impress upon the public mind a sense of Divine government, and the mutual obligations of men to each other, based upon their higher obligations to God, is not only within the province, but imperatively incumbent upon the ministry. Nor is this exhibition of ministerial prerogative and duty at all foreign to the present occasion, or to the scope of the text. In proportion as Religion and its teachings on any subject are neglected, the wisdom of the world is substituted for the truth of God; an undue reliance is placed upon an arm of flesh; and men become so far practical

atheists in the world. The first step in the progress of error, is a neglect of the truth; then come in the maxims of a false philosophy, when the doctrines of the Word are forgotten: and the defection is complete, when unbelief has thus gathered strength and courage to deny what none have been zealous to maintain. The most pestiferous notions in morals and in politics, have thus gained to themselves form and currency in the world. Your modern philosopher, whether in science, or ethics, or government, takes his place at first beside the Bible, not to oppose, but to supplement its teachings. His nostrums find a ready market, under the received impression that there is no balm in Gilead: and when the poison has well diffused itself, and worked its way down through the varied ranks of society, if it is at length discovered that God has spoken, and his Word conflicts with the deductions of a shallow but specious logic, behold! too often error triumphs over truth, and the conjectures of man outweigh the sure Word of inspiration. The Bible indeed is not a detailed system of philosophy, and it was not designed to be a treatise on political economy. But it is a grand system of truth, in which are revealed all the principles which are necessary to regulate all the diversified relations and duties of mankind. Our times especially demand that those principles should be brought out. And in a day when novel theories of government are rife; when the flowing and refluent wave of revolution is mingling thrones and dynasties and republics in promiscuous ruin; and when amid the din of factions and conflicts of arms the hoarse voice of anarchy is heard clamoring for the overthrow, with the pretext of reconstructing society; it is befitting that the voice of God should also be heard,-his Word interpreting his Providence, and, in the failure of human schemes, in the disasters and judgments attendant upon human presumption and folly, saying, "Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils." It is time we were made to understand, that verily there is a God who ruleth in the earth;" and that people and rulers alike were found humbly inquiring at his holy oracles.

It cannot be disguised that at this present juncture, the text has a peculiar and solemn significance to us, as a nation. Since the adoption of the Federal Constitution, there has not occurred in the history of this Republic, a period so fraught with peril, as the crisis through which we are now passing. That we have successfully encountered other dangers, has served to inspire public confidence in the stability of our institutions; and in the very thickest of the gloom, which has so darkly veiled our prospects of late, we have yet been cheered by the glimmering star of hope. Nevertheless we are persuaded that even now, if we consider well the elements of conflict, and the issues at stake, it is rather the proof of folly than of foresight, to be unconcerned at the aspect of the times. Were the struggle with a foreign power, we might be confident, either in the justice of our cause, or in the brave hearts and strong

arms of a united people. Were the question one of party policy, we might commit it to the decision of the ballot-box, and rest secure in the verdict of majorities. But the causes for present alarm are different, and more dangerous than these. There has been a severing of fraternal ties; a rupture of social affinities; a reckless disregard of national associations and sympathies; a narrowing down of patriotic impulses to the aspirations after a sectional triumph; a mutual jealousy and distrust, and a mutual acerbity of feeling and of language, which if continued must soon

be fatal to the existence of a confederated government.

It is ordinarily true, that in a representative State, the rulers reflect the feelings and sentiments of the people. We could hope. that at this present juncture our own country is in some degree an exception to the rule. But if the spirit which seems to prevail at the capital of this nation, is to be taken as the exponent of national sentiment, no forms of law, no constitutional provisions, no lingering remains of patriotism can long hold in union interests so discordant, antipathies so inveterate. It is not our purpose to trace to their causes the present distractions of the country, or to sit in judgment upon those who may be supposed to have produced them. We refer to facts as the omens of danger. And the flippancy and unconcern with which men in high places and in low places, have come to speak of that terrible alternative—"disunion," we regard as not the least among the causes of alarm. To predict with certainty the results of such an event, would baffle even the political sagacity of a Burke. But it needs no prophetic gift, to anticipate from it results of great and lasting evil. And though it should be considered as beside our province, yet we will not stifle the impulse or suppress the sentiment, that we do most heartily deprecate such an event, as fraught with disaster to the latest generation! We claim no superior forecast, yet we think that mind must be blinded by passion or prejudice, which can look beyond this consummation which we dread, and not have the field of its vision filled with a record, like the mystic roll of the prophet, "written within and without with mourning, lamentation, and woe!"

Now in a crisis like this, and with dangers so appalling, we may garnish the sepulchres of our patriot fathers, and bid the storied marble rise; we may appeal to their kindred blood, mingled on many a battle-field; we may recall their sentiments, their self-devotion, and their sacrifices. And it is well! Let these memorials at least rebuke, if they cannot exalt, the degenerate spirits of their descendants. Here and there perhaps a kindred soul will catch the generous glow of their lofty virtue, and, mindful only of their country and of their country's future, will dare to breast the swelling tide of faction, and, true to the sacred compact of the Constitution, to be nobly great, though it be only in the estimation of the good. Such men we trust there are, and, as the occasion of

this discourse reminds us,—such men there have been! We look with hope to those who yet remain. But our hope can only rise to confidence, when we look away from them to God! For even they who are gone, though dead, yet speak, and from their honored graves they echo back the admonition of the prophet, "Cease ye

from man, whose breath is in his nostrils."

There is a widely prevalent disposition, often rebuked in the Scriptures, to "trust in an arm of flesh, and make a man our hope." This is especially manifest in great public emergencies. As these emergencies often serve to call out the latent energies of some master mind, which seems to ride upon the whirlwind and direct the storm; so when the storm of danger threatens, we are prone to look about us, and fix our thoughts on this one, or on that, as the controlling genius, whose presence and whose power is the harbinger of safety. Thereupon, we demi-deify the man, and exalt him into the very Jupiter Stator of our hopes. Or if no such divinity can be found, we still sigh for the illustrious dead, and fondly invoke the heroes of a former age, to receive our hero-worship. How fervent and how frequent have been the aspirations of the past year, for a Washington, with his wise counsels and his steady hand, to guide our fortunes through the turmoil and the strife of threatened revolution. Such aspirations are no disparagement to any executive incumbent. The name of the Father of his Country knows comparison with none. Pure as he was wise, and good as he was great, "we ne'er shall look upon his like again." But it is time for us as a nation to learn that there is a Power more potent than any arm of flesh. And though the hand of a Washington were always upon the helm of State, yet there may be dangers which baffle the pile's art; there may be storms which no human skill can withstand. And God may permit those dangers to threaten, and may bid those storms to rise, thereby to punish this fond idolatry of man, and vindicate the denunciations of his Word.

Perhaps there are no people more prone than we to worship the idol of an hour. When once the popular enthusiasm is aroused in favor of any man, he is, for the time, the embodiment of all excellence, and concentrates upon himself the admiration and the hopes of the nation. Short, indeed, may be his reign, and trivial in itself the circumstance which hurls him from his lofty pedestal. Divided too may be the homage, for each party has its shrine. But to one divinity or another all conspire to yield the praise, the

trust, the honors, which belong only to God.

"Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's," is a maxim which justifies all due respect to talent, virtue, or office. But render "unto God the things which are God's," equally forbids the forgetfulness of his sovereign authority and government; the exaltation of a creature to the place of the Creator; or any confidence in man, which is not subordinate to a conscious and constant dependence upon God. There is in this modern apotheosis of

individuals an atheistical contempt for Jehovah, which may be well supposed to provoke his displeasure. It implies an absence of his fear, and it begets a violation of his law, which cannot fail to bring upon us the severity of his judgments. They are not words without meaning which his Spirit has indited, and the anathema is peculiarly applicable to nations: "Cursed is the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord." And though it should be a sentence slow in its fulfilment, yet pronounced by the same authority, it will infallibly be executed: "The nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish! yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted." But the lesson of the text is not only taught in those judgments upon a people which are the results of its neglect, but in those events of Divine Providence which reveal the weakness and the frailty of man. Was it only to startle his fears by the constant allusions to his end, that the Bible is filled with such graphic and affecting statements of human frailty? His "breath is in his nostrils"; his "life is a vapor," or the fleeting shadow of a summer cloud. The transient flower, that unfolds its leaves to display in its gorgeous beauty the careful finish and profuse abundance of Jehovah's works, whilst yet we gaze upon its exquisite form and hue, withers and dies, to teach the gazer's frailty! The prophet of old was commissioned, in accents solemn and sublime, to make a divine communication to the world. And what is this announcement from the throne? Some new principle in philosophy; some panacea for the ills of life; some unexpected transitions of empire? No! In all the awful grandeur of Jehovah's Word, it is still the story of human frailty:- "The voice said, Cry! And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass! and the goodliness thereof is as a flower of the field!" In accents more impressive still, God's voice repeats, from time to time, this truth we are so slow to learn. Death is the teacher now! and echoes the prophet's words from coffined dust, from open graves, from consecrated urns! He invades the sanctuary of sweet domestic bliss; we mark his ravages in the wide circle of our kindred; "our companions and acquaintances are turned into darkness;" and before his rentless hand, fall the illustrious victims who have been exalted to the very pinnacle of honor, as if to render more conspicuous their fall.

Recent events are well calculated to leave upon the hearts of this people the deep impression of the truth which we have endeavored to enforce. Amid the agitations of the public mind and the long and anxious struggle still pending at the capital, a star of the first magnitude suddenly fell; a giant intellect was stricken down, in the very arena of debate. The funeral pageant was scarcely over, when another honored son of the same State, and the successor to her greatest, fell, where he had fallen. "God speaketh once, yea, twice, but man regardeth it not." Still raged the war of angry words; still gleamed the lightnings of indignant eloquence, and

muttered the thunders of the coming storm. But now arrives another messenger from a distant court,-he comes charged with an embassy of startling interest,-his mission must be executed with haste; and, regardless alike of courtly etiquette and diplomatic formalities, he rushes at once and unbidden into the presence of our venerated Chief. His tone is imperious, his credentials are indubitable, and his is the Sovereign, whose mandates alone cannot be defied. All the arts of the most skilful diplomacy fail to swerve him from his purpose. In his presence the lips of eloquent Senators are sealed; and the wisdom of profoundest statesmen, and the courage of bravest warriors, can find expression only in silence and in tears: for who can reply to the summons of Death? Ah! 'tis the hand of God! and the brave old warrior, unharmed from many a battle fray, and now exalted to the very pinnacle of honor, yields to the resistless fiat,—as falls at last the brave old oak, upon the mountain's brow, whose brawny arms have wrestled with many a storm! We are not here to rehearse his battles and his victories: the muse of history will do them justice. We are not here to pronounce his eulogium: the task is more appropriate to other hands. But without trenching upon the sacredness of this place, or the spirit of the text, we may yet pause to bestow the tribute of a tear to the memory of a Patriot! For the good which he has done, and for the good which he intended; for his stern integrity, and his undoubted patriotism: for the honor which he has won, and for the office which he held; let his virtues be embalmed, and his name go down to posterity, among those whom his countrymen have delighted to honor! But we stand here to-day, to contemplate the providence of that omnipotent Being, by whom "princes reign, and rulers decree justice." And from the grave of our President, we gather again the lesson of our frailty; we hear again the voice of God, saying, "Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils."

It will be well for us, as a people, if we so far heed the high and solemn lessons of this event, as that we shall be led devoutly to recognize the providence of that God whom our fathers worshipped; as that we shall cease to build our hopes, exclusively, upon the elevation of certain men to office, or upon the success of certain parties and policies. A strong and well-founded preference for particular men and measures is lawful, as it is unavoidable. But, my hearers, we must learn, and God by his judgments, it would seem, intends to make us know, that the elevation or overthrow of men, the success or failure of measures, and our country's general weal or woe, are entirely in his hands. It is time, then, that we learn in all our ways to acknowledge God; that we are restrained by his fear from the public and shameless violation of his laws; and that our conscious dependence should prompt the humble and hearty prayer for his guidance and blessing, upon our rulers and upon ourselves. And may we not hope that this event will leave its salutary impression upon the Representatives of the people in

Congress assembled; that it will effectually rebuke, and rebuking assuage the bitterness of party and sectional dissensions; that unholy ambition will stand abashed in the presence of Infinite Majesty; and that the ceaseless strife of tongues will at length give place to the strife of mutual endeavors after the public good?

How the highest objects of earthly desire dwindle at the approach of Death; how fade away the glittering appendages of rank and office; how unattractive becomes the utmost goal of a fond ambition! But if the yet unopened grave thus echoes the Preacher's voice, and approaching Death writes "vanity of vanities" upon human hopes; how worthless and how vain must appear all the factitious distinctions of life, when contemplated from eternity. In what light, to the illustrious chief, do his world-renowned victories now appear? What value does he now attach to the hero's laurel. or to the statesman's civic crown? It was not the glory of a Mexican campaign, or the dignity of the highest executive office. but his conscious rectitude of purpose, to which his mind alone reverted in the final struggle. Crowned with the first honor of the first of nations, with the renown of deeds unsurpassed in ancient story, and with a spotless fame; yet of more value than them all, in the dying hour, was the conviction of an honest heart : "I have always done my duty." We would fondly hope that his conceptions of duty were not limited to the faithful discharge of official trusts. Yet even though they were.—Hear it, ve nations' rulers! too often struggling hardest for your private ends, and your personal aggrandizement,-no successes of ambition; no plaudits of a section or a party; no staff of office, though the highest, will impart one ray of comfort to the dying strife! Could we reach your ear, and were ours the power of graphic words, we would paint the coming scene, "the one event," when yourselves should feel the touch of death, and grapple with the fell destroyer: and there beside your dying pillow, should stand the phantom of your fond pursuits; and there the empty robes of rank; and there, if false to your trust, the wages of your iniquity; and there the spectre of your wounded, weeping country; with Conscience thundering in your ears, "I have not done my duty."

But a mightier hand has already drawn that scene, in the reality of an event over which the nation mourns. And may we not hope, that many of those to whom its lessons are more especially addressed, have in thought transferred themselves to the sufferer's dying bed; and in the presence chamber of Death solemnly resolved to trample on every unhallowed aspiration, and, sustained by an approving conscience, nobly to sacrifice upon the altar of a pure patriotism, everything but honor? If so, in his death, perhaps more than in his life, the hero and the statesman has subserved his country's good. We honor the spirit which dictated, and we heartily accord with the sentiment so eloquently expressed by a distinguished Senator: "If on the altar of our common country, we can sacrifice

the bitterness of party and of sectional feeling-if at this moment. when the heart of a great nation is palpitating with anxiety, we can come to the discharge of the high and solemn duties which devolve upon us, with hearts purified by affliction, in the singleness and sincerity of purpose and in the humility of spirit which become us; this melancholy dispensation of Providence will indeed have been productive of results most salutary to the great interests of the American people." Akin to this is the language of another, who was himself a competitor with the departed for the suffrages of the nation: "It is a solemn appeal, and should be solemnly heard and heeded. His death, whose loss we mourn, will not be in vain, if it tends to subdue the feelings that have been excited, and to prepare the various sections of our country for a mutual spirit of forbearance, which shall insure the safety of all, by the zealous co-operation of all. We could offer no more appropriate nor durable tribute to departed worth, than such a sacrifice of conflicting views upon the altar of our common country." Heaven forbid that these sentiments should evaporate in words! For the political results of this event, we look mainly to its effects in softening and subduing the tone of public feeling and legislative If it fails in this, and instead of arresting the angry current which has been sweeping over us, it should serve but as the occasion for intrigue to develop its plans, and faction to fan the fires of internal strife; then, woe! woe! to our country! the glory has departed! the motto upon our national escutcheon must be changed; and "Ilium fuit" must be the mournful record of our

But it were unseemly in this place to contemplate only those lessons of this event, which it addresses to us as citizens. In one point of view indeed, Death has a different aspect, when the victim is distinguished by influence and station, from that which he ordinarily bears. For, besides the sundering of those domestic ties, the rupture of which brings as keen a pang to the most exalted as to the most abject, there is in the one case also the breaking up of political organizations, the transfer of power, and the deep sense of public bereavement, increased by the possible contingencies of the event. But in another point of view, and considered in itself, Death is "the one event," that levels all distinctions, and is the same to all. The mightiest and the meanest, he whose exit is unnoticed as the fall of an autumn leaf, and he around whose bier a nation mourns, alike must meet the destroyer upon the same Death is, equally to both, the end of their earthly common terms. career; the introduction of their immortal spirits into the immediate presence of their Judge, to receive the sentence of irrevocable doom. Be it then a monarch or a beggar, considered in its relation to eternal consequences, it is an event which has no parallel in the revolutions of time, -an event, in either case, the issues of which no tongue can tell, no finite mind conceive. Ah!

it is not the position to which we may attain, the height from which we fall, or the circumstances of our descent to the tomb, which invest Death with its importance. It is because life is linked to immortality; because being once begun can never end; and because continued being implies an immortality of suffering or enjoyment, that Death, to whomsoever it may come, is the event

unparalleled in its issues.

In this aspect let us view it. Let those eternal issues enter into our estimate of Death, and let them control our choice, in the governing objects and pursuits of life. Let us "cease from man," alike as our dependence, and as the source of our enjoyments; and, contemplating the wreck of human greatness, and the end of human ambition, in the death of him who had reached an eminence, beyond which there was no higher to be hoped for or desired, let us ponder anew the emphatic interrogatory of Christ, "What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul; or what shall he give in exchange for his soul?"

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## THE HEAVEN OF THE BIBLE.

Reason is the chief faculty in putting us in possession of our knowledge of God. As the understanding receives the rays of knowledge which fall upon it from every quarter, like so many sunbeams, Reason compares them one with another—discerns their agreement, or difference, and makes its various inferences from them.

Light shines upon us from a thousand sources concerning the character and government of God. We see him in the countless wonders of nature and providence. We reason from one class of facts to another. We judge what must be the character of such a being as God, from the facts we have ascertained concerning him. And from all we have learned about him from other quarters, we come necessarily to certain conclusions concerning the character of the final abode we believe he has provided for his people.

We cannot doubt, for example, its boundless splendor, from the fact that even in this sinful world, we see such an exhibition of God's glory. We doubt not its holiness, from what we have elsewhere learned of the purity of God. We doubt not its perfect exemption from every evil, reasoning from the benevolence of God, which we cannot question must have a complete development in

such a world, wiping off all tears from all faces.

And we actually find the heaven of the Bible answering all the just demands of an enlightened reason on this point. Our sober judgment cannot array before us one item in the account of what such a world would provide for a rational being, but we shall find that item, either a precisely stated fact, or a matter of fair inference from some other fact. We can have no conception of anything that contributes to the dignity and happiness of moral beings, that is not included in the Bible account of heaven. And we can make no fair inference from the elsewhere revealed character of God, or from the nature and wants of man, concerning what heaven should be, but we shall find it implied in the actual revelation made by the Scriptures of that blessed world.—Evangelist.

### XIX.

# THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY.

#### BY REV. G. W. BLAGDEN, D.D.,

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"Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth: they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation."—John v. 28, 39.

In preaching from these words—the doctrine of "the resurrection of the body"—a difficulty may have to be met, arising from the probable general belief in it, by most, if not all of those who hear me, without having entered very minutely into its details,—or investigated closely the arguments which have been urged against it. And thus anything like an extended argument on such a generally admitted subject, may seem to many to be tedious and unnecessary.

Nevertheless, there are some points needing study and explanation, when we enter into these details;—and some very plausible and ingenious arguments have been urged against it, not only in former times, but of late, and in our own community;—not only by some who strenuously oppose all miracles, and deny even the resurrection of Christ;—but by other more serious and excellent men, who hold mainly to the doctrines of Emanuel Swedenborg.

These last forms of opposition to the generally received doctrine include two points:—First, the alleged unreasonableness of the resurrection of the body, and the asserted failure of its advocates to show its truth from the Scriptures;—and secondly,—the affirmed want of evidence for a future fixed day of judgment, as being connected with the doctrine of the resurrection of the body, in the common belief of those who embrace it.

They, who engage in this opposition, argue that the resurrection of the dead is continually going on—as individuals die, each one rising immediately from the grave in a spiritual body;—and that the judgment also is continually progressing,—every one, with all the nations of the world, being virtually before Christ now, and tried by the manner in which all and each treat the gospel, and that all, and each, at death, go away into everlasting punishment, or into life eternal.

OR

In answer to such positions, it will be my endeavor to show in this discourse:—

First,—That the bodies of the dead shall be raised.

Secondly,—That this resurrection of their bodies is consistent with reason.

Thirdly,-That it will occur at a future appointed time.

Fourthly,—That this time will be connected with a future appointed indement.

To these topics,—the fact—the reasonableness—the time—and the connections of the resurrection of the body with the religious

uses of the doctrine,-I affectionately ask your attention.

I. In affirming that the bodies of the dead shall be raised, we assume, what we think is very evident from the Scriptures, that the soul exists in a spiritual state immediately after death,—a state adapted to its moral character, and not improbably, in a spiritual form. Therefore, Christ said to the dying thief, "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise:" and narrated of the rich man, that he died, and was buried, and in hell (i. e. the place of departed souls,) "lifted up his eyes, being in torment."

We hold, further, that this state will be final, but not consummated,—the beginning of an endless life—the budding of a process growing and reaching at last its more developed state, at the

time of the resurrection and the judgment.

1. In evidence of the fact that the bodies of the dead shall be raised, we have, first, the text, of which one of the most ingenious opposers of the resurrection of the body has been constrained to say,—"This is undoubtedly the strongest passage in the New Testament in favor of the common view of the resurrection, and one in respect to which it becomes us seriously to guard against any undue bias, from theoretical promptings, to wrest it from its true-

meant design." (Bush.)

If we guard against undue bias, certainly it is difficult to conceive how any other meaning can be drawn from it, than that the bodies of the dead shall, in some sense and form, be summoned from their sepulchres by the voice of Christ. For it is not merely the dead, of whom it is declared, that they shall hear his voice; but "all who are in the graves." (πάντες οἱ ἐν τοῦς μνημέσος.) And, by the very terms of the theory of those who deny that in any reasonable sense our bodies rise,—the spiritual bodies which they affirm do rise at the time of death, cannot with any propriety be affirmed to be "in the graves." But Christ declared, "the hour is coming, when all who are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth!" It seems impossible to invent a form of words more directly adapted to express the idea of bodies, once buried, raised from the grave.

2. Secondly:—In all the cases of translation to heaven, or raising from the dead, recorded in the Bible, the body is affirmed to have been translated or raised. (Or, these facts are affirmed of the body.)

In the Old Testament, when Enoch saw not death, but was taken of God :-- when Elijah was taken from earth, in the chariot of fire : -when the dead man was brought to life on touching the bones of the prophet :-- and in the New Testament, when Jairus' daughter was raised to life again by the power of the Redeemer: - when the widow of Nain had her son restored to her, from the bier on which they were carrying him to the grave;—when at the voice of Jesus, crying with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth," he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes; -when, at the crucifixion (of Christ) "many bodies of saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after his resurrection, and appeared unto many;"-(Matt. xxvii. 52, 53;)-when of Jesus himself, it was said to the women, by the angels clothed in white, "He is not here; he is risen:"—and in that sublime description of the resurrection given by the apostle Paul to the Thessalonians, when they "which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them ('the dead in Christ') in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air:" -(1 Thess. iv. 17:)—in all and in each of these cases, the bodies of the dead are affirmed to have been raised, either in flesh and blood, still to continue, for a season, in this present world; or in a glorified, spiritual form, that they might at once inherit the kingdom of God, as flesh and blood cannot do.

Reasoning, therefore, from what has been to what shall be; and using only the same form of words, to express the resurrection of the dead which shall arise, that the Scriptures use in asserting the resurrection of those who have been raised,—we can come to no other reasonable conclusion, than that the bodies of the dead shall

come forth (from their graves,) at the voice of Christ.

3. There are, thirdly, a number of expressions used in Scripture, respecting the resurrection, which cannot be fairly explained except

on the theory that the body shall be raised.

a. Thus Christ, on one occasion, drew a motive from the inability of men to kill the soul, to urge his disciples not to fear their ability to kill the body only: exhorting them rather to fear him, who after he had killed, had power to destroy both soul and body in hell. Does not this imply that the body exists after death, as truly as the soul; and therefore that it is raised in the resurrection?

b. When he spoke of his own resurrection, he referred to that of his body, saying, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." But the Evangelist adds:—"He spoke then of the

temple of his body." (John ii. 19, 21.)

c. The manner in which the terms "raise the dead," and other similar phrases, are used in the Scriptures, clearly implies the resur-

rection of the body.

When Christ said to his disciples, "heal the sick, raise the dead, cast out devils," (Matt. x. 8,) certainly the idea is, that their bodies shall be raised. The same is true of those messages he sent to John the Baptist, as answers to his inquiry: "Art thou he that should

come?"—"The deaf hear, the dead are raised." (Matt. xi. 5; Luke vii. 22.) And when Paul writes to the Thessalonians, in a passage already cited, that "the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first;" and then adds, "we which are alive shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet them in the air,"—can he mean anything other than that the bodies of all shall arise?

Indeed, if all those texts applicable only to the resurrection, in which these words "raise," "raised," with their other derivatives, are used, be compared with the great number of cases in which the same verb is used in the gospel, with respect to other things, it will be very clear that the meaning must be, that in some sense

and form, the bodies once buried shall arise.

The very term "resurrection" itself, although it is affirmed to suggest only, as usual in Scripture, the idea of "reviviscence," or restoration to life, yet, taken in connection with such passages as have been already cited, cannot well mean anything less than the raising up again of that which was laid in the grave, and which must refer, if it has any appropriate meaning, to the resurrection of the body, that was recumbent in the tomb.

What pensive mourner, or serious stranger, as he walks in the silent shades of that still resting-place for the dead, near our city, would not think, as he passed by that simple but well-conceived monument, of plain granite, and read upon its base that single, but expressive word, "Resurgemus," (we shall rise again,) would not spontaneously associate it with the thought of the resurrection, in

some form, of the sleeping dust beneath?

4. But, leaving verbal criticism, we conclude our review of the direct scriptural evidence for the resurrection of the body, by remarking, that this doctrine best explains those very frequent declarations of Scripture, which attribute the resurrection of the dead

to the special and almighty power of God.

Thus Paul affirms of Christ, that "he shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his own glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself." (Philipp. iii. 21.) It is recorded as one of the special prerogatives of God, that he "quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not, as though they were." (Rom. iv. 17.) And the apostle, in his epistle to the Ephesians, writes of "the exceeding greatness of God's power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead." (Eph. i. 19, 20.)

There can be no doubt, that in the bare rising of a spiritual body, from the fleshly one, destroyed by death, without any special accompanying circumstances, silently and unobserved, there would be, as in the operation of many similar natural laws, a strong and interesting illustration of the power of God. But, such an event, great and glorious as it would intrinsically be, would fail to meet, and answer to, those remarkably strong expressions, and descriptions, used and given in the Bible, touching the resurrection of the dead. How inadequately would it correspond, for example, with those short but sublime words of the apostle Paul: "Behold, I show you a mystery: we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed!" (1 Cor. xv. 51, 52.)

Such expressions convey to every mind something more than the silent fulfilment of an ordinary law of nature. They imply a special act; an act so mysterious and so grand, that it is done in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, and is at once announced and accompanied by the voice of the archangel, and the trump of

God.

Such an act is not met by the theory of a silent, unobserved rising of the dead. It implies wonder as well as power; and a rapidity of execution, and a sublimity of accompanying events, only in keeping with such ideas as are awakened by Jesus, in the text: "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth!"

II. But to all this scriptural evidence for the final resurrection of the bodies of the dead, it is objected: first, that it is unreasonable and unphilosophical; secondly, that no one can presume to contend that the same particles once buried shall rise again; and thirdly, that it fails to meet the analogy of the dying grain of wheat used by Paul, as he treated of the resurrection, in his epistle to the Corinthians.

1. On the first point,—its unreasonableness,—the utter absurdity is alleged, of our even imagining that parted limbs and empty frames shall be ever seen, literally, flying through the air, each to meet its proper body, and its former soul. And the imaginings of poetry are cited to enhance the grossness of the thought, in the words of one, who, in the description of the last day, has sung:—

"Now charnels rattle; scattered limbs, and all The various bones, obsequious to the call, Self-moved, advance; the neck perhaps to meet The distant head; the distant head, the feet. Dreadful to view, see, through the dusky sky, Fragments of bodies in confusion fly; To distant regions journeying, there to claim Deserted members and complete the frame."\*

2. The second objection urges, that it is impossible to conceive that the same particles which once composed the buried body rise; since science teaches us, beyond all reasonable doubt, that they have mingled with their kindred dust, and entering into vegetation

<sup>\*</sup> See Bush's work.

have united with the rank grass of the sepulchre; and even through varied and traceable combinations have become incorporated with the flesh of other animals, and possibly, yea, even probably, in some

cases, with that of man himself.

3. And then, in the third objection, it is argued, that we cannot adduce any good evidence that there is any living germ of life, in the decaying body of man, after the spirit has left it; and therefore, we cannot reasonably maintain that the dead body shall spring up as Paul affirmed the wheat or other product grew from its dying grain; because in that grain, though it did die, there was a living germ, untouched by decay,—and we have no evidence of such a germ in the buried body.

1. To the first of these objections we reply, that it forms no part of our doctrine of the resurrection. The same Bible that teaches us the reality of this great event, has also taught us, that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God." And therefore we have no idea whatever that parted limbs and frames shall ever literally fly, in the resurrection, each to its appropriate body

and soul.

2. The second objection,—which affirms that the same particles of matter that composed the body cannot rise, because they have mingled with other bodies after death; and even while living changed, as science has taught us, once in every seven years;—we affirm to be strongly in favor of the resurrection of the body.

For, the fact that even while living, the particles of the frame of every one change repeatedly in the course of his life; so that, as it respects the mere substance of which he is composed, the man of thirty is an entirely changed being from the youth of eighteen, shows indisputably, that personal identity does not consist in a body composed of the same particles of matter, but in a form assumed from ever-varying and distinct particles, by the inward spirit of a man, acting according to its own laws of organization, ordained of God.

So that, as the wheat, or any other grain, by which the apostle illustrated the reality of the resurrection, consisted of particles wholly different from the blade, and ear, and full corn in the ear, which sprung from its decaying body, and lifting the earth, took for its sustenance and changing form, the rain, and dew, and air of heaven,—at once another, and yet the same, (alter et idem,) so also the resurrection body, though it consist not of precisely the same particles once laid in the grave, may yet be as truly the body which once enveloped the soul-according to the laws of its organization, ordained of God,—as the blade, and ear, and corn in the ear, have a body at once another, yet the same with the grain And thus the process of the apostle is met and reonce sown. alized:—"It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body." (1 Cor. xv. 42-44.)

3. To all this, the third objection alleges the difficulty, that in the dying grain of wheat, there was a germ of life, which was from the first unaffected by destruction;—that there was thus in it a continuance of life, in the midst of death;—established and sustained by the power of that God who "beautifully mingles life and death:"—but that there is no evidence of any such germ in a dead

and decaying human body.

To this I reply, first, in the words of Scripture, that "the body without the spirit is dead;" and again, it is recorded of one whom Christ raised from the dead, that "her spirit came again, and she arose straightway," Luke viii. 55. And also of the son of the widow of Zarephath raised by Elijah, that the prophet "cried unto the Lord, and said, O Lord my God, I pray thee, let this child's soul come into him again. And the Lord heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived,"

1 Kings, xvii. 21, 22.

From such passages, are we not warranted in believing that the SOUL, or spirit of man, is the germ, from which his body shall receive life?—that the soul, like the germ of the grain, or plant, or flower, at the appointed time, and by the command of God, who "quickeneth the dead, and calleth the things that be not, as though they were," shall take to itself from the surrounding elements, the very materials, it may be, of which its former body was composed, however scattered they may have been by distance, or by time, and, like the grain that grows into the blade, and ear, and corn, form to itself, agreeably to the law of its organization, a body, in the words of the apostle, "changed," from corruptible to incorruptible,-from mortal to immortality,-yet the same?-God giving it such a body as it pleased him. Indeed, who shall say, on the very principles urged against our doctrine, by our opponents themselves, that the particles of the bodies of the dead having all been long since mingled into innumerable other bodies, of either animals or plants, and mixed with the waters of the sea, or dust of the earth, and been scattered by the four winds of heaven, it may be into far distant lands from the place in which they originally laid,—who shall say that these very elements into which they have been changed, may not be conveying them—as the down of the thistle bears its seed-to the very spirit which is hereafter to assume them as its clothing? Already the stormy wind, fulfilling God's word, may be bearing on its wings the elements of resurrection bodies to their destined use!

Surely, that God, in virtue of whose mysterious natural law the magnet, dropped in the sands, causes the grains which it affects to assume positions agreeably to their respective polarity, can cause the immortal spirit so to affect the elements that surround it, as to

clothe itself with its final spiritual body.

I say, its *final* spiritual body, because the suggestions now made, founded, as we have seen them to be, on plain declarations in the xxiv.

word of God, showing the necessity of the presence of the spirit to give vitality to the body, afford, I think, when compared with some other passages, reasonable ground for another, to say the least, probable conclusion, namely, that as Christ said to the dying thief, "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise;"—and of the rich man, that after "he died, and was buried, he lifted up his eyes, being in torment;"-and specially as Moses and Elias appeared, to the awe-struck disciples on the mount of transfiguration, conversing with Christ;—we are warranted in conceiving, that in the intermediate state of departed souls-between death and the general resurrection—they may assume bodies suited to that state, which, like the stem, and the leaf, and the bud, before the flower has blown in all the richness of its beauty, wait the power when, at the voice of Christ, and for the purposes of the judgment, and the final state of rewards and punishments, they shall resume the bodies in which they dwelt on earth, now changed, "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump;"—the corruptible putting on incorruption—the mortal, immortality?

Why then should it be thought a thing incredible with us, that God should raise the dead? (Acts xxvi. 8.) Are we not warranted in saying, that the resurrection of the body is as philosophical as it is scriptural? Has not enough been said to show, that God can make—and may be even now making—the rank grass moaning in the melancholy breezes, over the obscurest grave; the very animals that may crop it, or the birds that may consume its seeds, vehicles to bear to their destined uses, the bodies of the buried dead? In this view, as well as in others, according to the words of our Saviour, in immediate connection with the text:—"The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live!" (Ver. 25.)

III. The next two parts of our subject,—the time of the resurrection, and its connection with the last judgment,—are so closely and necessarily connected with the fact, and the reasonableness of the resurrection of the body—they may be said to be so dependent, as consequents, upon these, that we shall need to consider them but briefly.

1. A future, appointed time for the resurrection, is specified, by our Saviour, in the text. "The hour is coming, in which" (&oa & r) if all that are in the graves shall hear his voice." The apostle Paul fairly and fully implies the same truth, when he writes, in the future tense:—"Behold, I show you a mystery: we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." It is the future tense;—not the trumpet is sounding; but the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised.

2. That the last judgment will be connected with this future

and fixed time for the resurrection, is also implied by Jesus, in the text. "They that are in the graves shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." The awards of life and damnation, we know, are ever declared in the Scriptures, to be the results of that last judgment, in which the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, and shall sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations: and when, after having separated them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats, he shall say to "them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:"-and "unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." -"And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal." (Matt. xxv. 41-46.)

In strict accordance with this time of future judgment, as being connected with the resurrection of the bodies of the just and of the unjust, (Acts xxiv. 15,) is Paul's declaration to the men of Athens, in immediate connection with his preaching to them the resurrection of the dead, that God "hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained: whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead." (Acts xvii. 31.)

And is there not a congruity, let me ask before leaving these points, in this resumption of their raised bodies by departed souls, and these results of the judgment, with the proceedings of a holy

government, and our own moral feelings?

Does it not seem just and proper, that beings judged, and rewarded, and condemned, for the deeds done in the body, should appear in the body, before the judgment seat? May it not be really necessary for them, in entering both into the blessedness of the righteous, and the punishment of the wicked, to have intercourse with things outward, and with other beings, whether in heaven or in hell, though raised and spiritual bodies, adapted in their qualities to their

respective states?

So strongly indeed have such considerations commended themselves to that opposer of the doctrine of the resurrection of the body, and of judgment yet to come.—from whom the objections to them, considered in this discourse, have been principally taken, that even he has said, in words which I quote from his treatise on the subject:—"We do not question that ends worthy of infinite wisdom may dictate the ordainment of some grand crisis in the moral history of the universe, for the purpose of revealing—of making manifest—in some illustrious way, the righteous grounds of a judgment already passed. Nor, as we have before intimated, do we see anything incongruous in the idea, that the word of inspiration may be so framed as to create the impression, that both the resurrection

and the final award may concentrate themselves to this great epoch, simply from the fact that their realized results shall then be more signally divulged to all orders of intelligences."\* But, if "the word of inspiration be so framed as to create this impression," is it not the true impression,—the most important impression? And must not whatever other views we may arrive at, respecting a spiritual body, and a judgment of any kind, carried on in any sense, in this world, preparatory to that which is to come, be wholly incidental and subordinate to this first impression made by the word of God?

IV. The religious uses of the truth we have considered are many and various. We can now attend only to those which seem most important and appropriate.

 This resurrection of our bodies is ever represented in the Scriptures as resulting from the resurrection and power of Christ.

and as connected with his work.

It is through Christ that men shall rise. He has risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that sleep. Not in the sense that he was, literally, the first being who in any form rose from the dead, but that it is through his power, as one with the Father, that any have risen or shall rise. It is with reference to his work of redemption, and on account of it, that the doors of death

and the grave have been opened for any.

He has abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light. It is to meet him as judge, that our bodies shall rise. Of his resurrection, the apostles were ordained to be the witnesses. This, in the beginning of the proclamation of the gospel, with its necessarily associated truths, was the great theme of their preaching. They founded the divine truth of his religion on the fact. It still rests on that fact. No one can deny it, even though he be a professed preacher of the gospel, without proclaiming another gospel than that which Paul preached unto men.

The testimony of Jesus, therefore, is the spirit of this, as of all other parts of prophecy. In this, as in all other parts, we know nothing save Jesus Christ and him crucified. It is through faith in him alone, that we can be prepared to meet death, or rise to judgment. For "the sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law; but thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory, through our

Lord Jesus Christ."

2. The resurrection, too, is ever represented in the Scriptures as at once a motive, and an illustration of that spiritual rising from the death of sin, to the life of holiness, required in the gospel.

It was in speaking of this spiritual renovation, absolutely needful in all, and every one, that our Saviour was led to utter the text. And he said "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my

<sup>\*</sup> Bush, on the Resurrection, p. 278, chap. ix.

word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." And then he added,—as if intentionally combining the spiritual and bodily resurrection, as mutually illustrating one another:—" Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they

that hear shall live." (vs. 24, 25.)

It is with reference to this view, the righteous are said in the Scriptures, to rise in a peculiar sense,—a sense in which the wicked do not. Thus our Saviour is recorded in the Gospel of Luke, as having spoken to the Sadducees, who questioned him of the resurrection, that they might entrap him, of those "who shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead." (Luke xx. 35.) And it is in this sense, probably, that the apostle Paul affirmed to the Philippians, that he counted all things but dung, and suffered the loss of all things, that he might know Christ, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable to his death; if by any means he might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. (Philip. iii. 8–11.)

Enough is said, in the Bible, to show that the wicked as well as the righteous, the unjust as well as the just, shall rise, and rise to enter on the second death. But, in comparison with that of the righteous, their rising again is barely mentioned, as if the sacred pen-

man dreaded to write of it!

Not improbably, their very bodies, though immortal, shall be different from those of the righteous, and be adapted to their character and state!—being inlets to the unhappy influences of that world of we into which they shall depart.

3. This doctrine is strongly adapted to encourage all Christians to stability, and persevering zeal in their Christian duty.

This, indeed, is the great use made of it by the apostle Paul in that celebrated chapter of his first epistle to the Corinthians, in

which he directly treats of the resurrection.

There, after having shown, with great power and beauty, the reality of the resurrection of *Christ*, and the connected and consequent reality of our *own* resurrection; and having, in the most sublime and eloquent words, exulted in man's entire freedom from the sting of death, and triumphant victory over the grave, through Christ, he sums up all he had been saying with one of his own characteristic and emphatic expressions, and says:—" *Therefore* my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." (1 Cor. xv. 58.)

He had before declared, that "if Christ be not risen, his preaching was vain, and their faith was vain;" and that he and his fellow-apostles were false witnesses of God. He had said also, with reference, doubtless to the self-denial, and even suffering, to which true Christians, in the performance of duty, would in this world

ever be exposed, that if in this life only we have hope, we are of all men most miserable.

But raising his eye of faith beyond the grave, and looking into the eternal world, and remembering that we shall rise again, he animated himself and others by the conviction that he and they should not labor in vain; but that in eternity they should receive, through grace, a glorious and eternal reward! So should Christians now, and ever, comfort one another with these words. Our natural desire of immortality, and a true frame, requires thus to be sustained.

4. Our subject also gives great comfort to all Christians in the death of pious relatives and friends. A Christian friend once said to me, being troubled in thought respecting the form assumed by departed souls previous to the resurrection of their former bodies, How, on your theory, can I satisfactorily conceive of one whom I love, who has left me, and gone hence, to be here no more?

But our subject, presented in the light of the word of God, need not, and will not, exclude the idea of form as connected with departed souls, adapted to their present state of being, even as form must have appertained to Moses and Elias as they talked with Jesus on the mount of transfiguration to the eyes of Peter, and James, and John. (Matt. xvii. 2; Mark ix. 2.)

It is form, we have reason to believe, therefore, suited to their state, but not yet so developed or exhibited as to be fully adapted to ours, nor to be thus developed or exhibited until the resurrection; even as the brilliant bud, sweet to think of, and beautiful to behold, and fragrant to the senses, may not have yet bloomed into the splendid flower.

But, it is beginning to bud, and it shall soon bloom and blossom. And so, each lonely Christian mourner, "concerning them which are asleep," must "sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For, if we believe that *Jesus* died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him." (1 Thess. iv.

13, 14.)
Yes! yes!—may each mourner confidently say:—Thou parent! husband! wife! brother! sister! child! relative! and friend! thou art not lost, but gone before me! I can, by faith in Jesus, think of thee now! I shall hope to see thee then, "in that day!" And when I meet thee, no embarrassment shall arise to oppress us, from any kind of past relations, necessary in our present state, for among them who shall be accounted worthy of that resurrection, they neither "marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God." Every such mourner may appropriately exclaim, in the words, which, in seasons of death among us, are often cited:—

"Break from his throne, illustrious morn! Attend, O earth! his sovereign word; Restore thy trust, a glorious form Shall then arise to meet the Lord!" 5. In conclusion, this subject adds to the solemnity of the day of judgment, and increases our obligation to prepare for it.

And here I would especially allude to the theory of the judgment's being carried on in this life, and solemnly recognize its

truth, in a proper sense, as I would avoid it in a false one.

There is a sense—a most solemn and important one—in which the judgment of this world is now. As old Simeon blessed the parents of Jesus, and said unto Mary, his mother, "Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against,"—"that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed," (Luke ii. 34, 35;)—so now the exhibition of Christ in his gospel as the Redeemer, personally present, died aforetime, tries the human heart. And the preaching of his gospel, in every congregation—in this congregation now—is a savor of life unto life, or of death unto death. So that,

#### "'Tis not the whole of life to live."

Each one of us, under the gospel, is preparing a character for eternity—is being tried—yes, in this sense is being judged.

The last judgment, when the dead shall have been raised, will be but the formal consummation, of what has been practically, and unchangeably decided here. And it has been, in this view, as truly as it was strikingly and solemnly said, "Our sentence, in truth, is

passed before our graves are dug."—(Bush.)

So that, this revelation to us of an hour in which all that are in the graves shall hear Christ's voice, and shall come forth, they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation,—with all the stupendous scenery of the coming judgment,—mingle with the discipline of life,—the invitations of the gospel—a Saviour's love—the testimony of conscience, and the stirrings of the Holy Spirit, in urging all of us, and every one of us, to prepare to meet our God. Especially do they urge us to fly to the Saviour, to make the Judge our Friend.

#### XX.

# DUTIES OF HEADS OF HOUSEHOLDS.

#### BY REV. JOSEPH F. TUTTLE,

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"For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him."—Gerrets xviii. 19.

"As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."—Johhua xxiv. 15.
"For I have told him, that I will judge his house forever, for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile and he restrained them not."—I Sakura iii. 13.

In each of these passages, the responsibilities of parents to their children stand prominent, and in the first two those responsibilities are extended to all composing the household. The Lord commended Abraham because he would enjoin his children and household to keep the way of the Lord, and Joshua boldly declares that The honor of his house as well as himself, shall serve the Lord. these eminent men, did not consist in doing more than their duty, nor did the curse on Eli's family arise from neglecting a work of supererogation, but one of highest obligation and necessity.

These facts in sacred history furnish a theme of immense importance, viz. the responsibilities of the heads of households.

By the head of a household, I mean, primarily, any one who stands at the head of, and has control of a family, who, by the laws of God and man, is placed in this relation to a family.

In commending Abraham it is to be remarked, that the name of Sarah is not mentioned, and also that Joshua does not qualify his vow so as to depend on the aid of his wife. So also the wife of Eli is not mentioned.

A household, according to the Scripture, and common use, may consist of a wife, of children, and of those in the employ or under the guardianship of the head, residing in the family. Children, wards, servants, apprentices, and other laborers connected with the family, are all embraced in the definition of the household. as in all other relations, responsibility is coëxtensive with obligation.

And in examining the responsibilities of heads of households, I may remark,—First, that whatever those responsibilities may be, the Scriptures make no exception in favor of the age or any other circumstances connected with members of the household.

of having attained legal majority, or the fact of being of a different religion, or even that of the dependent being older than the head of the family, are nowhere mentioned as exceptions. The only question to be considered is this, Does the person belong to the household in such a sense that he is under the control of its head? Abraham had a great household, yet the text no more exempts from the general law, the gray-headed servant, than the young herdsman; the steward Eliezer of Damascus, than Ishmael or the child All the household were included without one specified exception. The same unqualified law is seen in the vow of Joshua, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." In the fourth commandment, the obligation to keep the sabbath is not only imposed on the head, but the household also. Nor is it made a general obligation, resting on each individual, for which each one is himself responsible, but the obligation to enforce that law on all the household is imposed on the head. He was not even to consider his duty bounded by the limits which embrace the son and daughter. the man-servant and maid-servant, the ox and the ass, but as extending even to the stranger who might be holding a temporary relation to the household.

This is an exceedingly important view, since it is common among pious men to relieve themselves of some part of those obligations which God has fixed on them. Some parents seem to feel that they are not bound to look after the conduct of their children who may have attained the age of sixteen, eighteen or twenty years, much less when they attain their majority, although still members of the household. Others entertain the same erroneous opinion concerning their domestics and laborers. They sometimes excuse themselves, by saying, the man or woman is of age, or of a different religious belief; or he is so ignorant and low-minded as to have no religious sentiment, or some other excuse. To such an extent is this true, that some domestics are suffered to live years in pious families, without the heads of those families insisting on an undoubted right,—the presence of all committed to their care at the

regular worship of God at home, and publicly:

I cannot forbear enlarging on a topic which is becoming practical in this country. A large number of families rely on colored or foreign laborers. The latter are especially to be pitied, because so many pious employers regard themselves as favored with a special exemption from the rigid principles on which God has constituted the household. These laborers, in many cases, believe things which are likely to prove fatal to their salvation. We need not go so far as to say that no Romanist can be saved, but that the most of those who make up our laborers, are in great ignorance of the way of salvation through Christ, and in many cases, with all their devotion to their religion, they do not consider profane swearing, drunkenness, and other vices as inconsistent with that religion. They know more about confessing sin to a fellow-sinner than to God, about the

Virgin than Christ, about holy water than the pure water of life, Education has done nothing for them but to bind chains upon them, and to draw around them a thick veil of darkness. To such an extent is this true, that persons may be found among us who are just as ignorant of what God requires of them to be saved, as if they had always lived in the darkest corner of Burmah or China.

And when such voluntarily become members of our household, does not God in his providence make it our duty if possible to remove the deep darkness, and break the heavy chains which afflict these strangers? And yet some of us permit such to remain months and years under our roofs, without once telling them kindly what we conceive to be our duty to them: a duty so plainly involved in the household relation, that we must insist on maintaining it. It is greatly to our shame to be guilty of this neglect. Faithfulness on our part might save many deceived souls from delusion, and bring them out of deep darkness into the clear light of the

gospel of Christ.

When a foreigner entered the family of an Israelite, without regard to his religious belief or worship, he must conform to those religious regulations, which Jehovah had prescribed for the conduct of the household. If he refused to comply he could not remain. Not only in that case must be leave the family, but the nation. Nor do I speak of this as a matter of religious dictation, but of There is something unseemly, and outraging all proper law, that a foreign priest, without a single sympathy for the Bible into which our civil institutions are engrafted, should be allowed to exert more power in our houses than we ourselves, when we are convinced that he is wrong in doctrine and practice, and that we are right, that his teaching is according to the tradition of the elders, and that ours is from God. It is insufferable that, when a good man is striving to lead his own children to heaven through means of family religion, any members of his household should be instigated to disturb even the time devoted to worship, not only by absenting themselves, but by continuing their customary work.

And does it not appear plain, that those heads of households who permit such things, have forgotten a plain principle laid down in the Scriptures, that no exception is made in favor of any member of the household, be he a heathen, a Mohammedan, a Romanist, or an infidel? Such do not imitate Abraham, commanding his household to keep the right way of the Lord; nor Joshua, who boldly

said, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

Let this illustration stand for the principle in its application to all the possible cases arising in the regulation of family religion.

We may now consider, secondly, the nature of the obligation

which rests on the heads of households.

And for the sake of clearness and simplicity, we may consider the nature of this obligation in two parts: viz., 1st, the obligation to secure a proper external conduct in those who compose the household; and 2d, the obligation to use all scriptural means to bring every member of the household to a saving knowledge of the

truth as it is in Jesus Christ.

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1st. The obligations resting on the heads of households to secure a proper external conduct in those committed to their care. This brings the history of Eli's family distinctly before us. It is worthy of special notice, that Eli gave the best advice to his sons, for "he said unto them, Why do ye such things? for I hear of your evil doings by all this people. Nay, my sons; for it is no good report that I hear. Ye make the Lord's people to transgress. If any man sin against another, the judge shall judge him: but if a man sin against the Lord, who shall entreat for him?" (1 Sam. ii. 23-25.) We can scarcely imagine a more searching exhortation than is found in these words. The age of these sons we do not know, but gather from the context that they had nearly or quite attained to manhood.

When Samuel repeated to Eli what God had communicated to him, the reply of Eli showed that he possessed personally no ordinary piety: "It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good." (Ibid. iii. 18.) And he possessed another notable trait of piety. Israel was battling with the Philistines, and they had taken the ark of the Lord that it might save them out of the hands of their enemies. The sons of Eli, already marked as early victims of the divine displeasure, accompanied the ark. The aged priest and father sat by the wayside, watching for news concerning the battle, and lo, what was the trouble uppermost in his heart? Was it those sons with the curse hanging over them? No. The record of the fact is very affecting: "Eli sat upon a seat by the wayside watching; for his heart trembled for the ark of God." (Ibid. iv. 13.) The panting messenger has already told him, "Hophni and Phinehas are dead;" but the narrative informs us that two sons cut off in one day, did not inflict the keenest pang. It was "when he made mention of the ark of God, that he fell from off his seat backwards by the side of the gate; and his neck brake, and he died." (v. 18.) The heaviest judgment which came on this extraordinary man, was the wrong done to the Lord, in that the divine prediction (Ibid. ii. 32) was fulfilled: "Thou shalt see an enemy in my habitation."

From this narrative we may gather an important lesson concerning the obligation of heads of households to secure a proper external conduct in those committed to their care. The law, as it pertained to the Israelites, was plain and severe. "If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, which will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, and that when they have chastened him, will not hearken unto them: then shall his father and his mother lay hold on him and bring him out to the elders of his city, and unto the gate of the place. And they shall say unto the elders of his city, this our son is stubborn and rebellious; he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton and a drunkard. And all the

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men of his city shall stone him with stones, that he die; so shalt thou put evil away from among you; and all Israel shall hear and fear." (Deut. xxi. 18-21.) The parent at his peril must not suffer the sin specified on his son. He was not to be a mere moral suasionist, but was to chastise his son. He was not to resort to the last punishment, until wise teachings had been enforced with If these means failed, in order to arrest the contagion which might corrupt the whole community, he must make the case The crime is to be alleged and proved, and then the crim-

inal was to be stoned to death.

The Scriptures do not hint that Eli had done anything more than to remonstrate with his sons. He did not chastise them, and consequently was debarred from the final resort. The church of God, in consequence, was greatly dishonored, because this father, as the head of a household, had neglected legally and rigidly to execute the laws of the Lord. And this pertained to external conduct. Eli could not change the hearts of his sons. Many sons might have been as vile at heart as Hophni and Phinehas, and yet maintained a proper external conduct. Plainly, in this respect, Eli was responsible, and because he did not properly meet this responsibility, the curse was to rest on his house forever.

Our laws do not suffer such a resort in case of filial and incorrigible disobedience, as that pointed out in the Mosaic code, and yet there can be no doubt that the essential elements of that code are of divine origin and perpetual force. Hence we may consider this as an argument in point, and illustrated by cases which are no more

practical than painful.

Profaneness is not only one of the most foolish and useless of vices, but one most displeasing to God. So long as a child or servant is in a family, the head of that family is responsible for his observance of the third commandment. What possible right has any father to permit his son, unrebuked, to take the name of God in vain? What right has any householder to permit a laborer in his employ to breathe out blasphemy against Jehovah? In the twenty-fourth chapter of Leviticus this very sin is specified, and the stranger is placed on the same footing as the son. I will go farther and ask, where is the right of any head of a household to confine himself to mere remonstrances in his attempts to check this evil in those under his control?

By the same plain rule, we may judge the conduct of households in regard to the Sabbath. The fourth commandment settles this question beyond dispute. We have no warrant to allow our sons or dependants to travel on the Sabbath, or otherwise trespass on holy time, without such excuse as shall be valid at the bar of God. It is needless to say that this embraces improper recreations and pursuits, and conduct in the house of God. The heads of households are held responsible for a proper outward respect to all the

public as well as social duties of religion.

Perhaps facts will sustain me in the assertion, that a most urgent want of the community is here developed. The corruption of morals and manners, the growth of ruinous vices, and the destruction of souls, are progressing with the fatality of an epidemic, because this plain scriptural principle, this essential element of the household institution, has been so extensively forsaken. I appeal to the heads of households to restore this principle, which is as scriptural as it is safe, and admirable as it is necessary to the prominence and power with which God, who created man, has dignified it. He who walks according to its divine directions in the control of his family, will receive the reward of Abraham, whilst the one who either neglects or wilfully disobeys it, will bring on himself and his house the curse of God on every Eli whose children make themselves vile, and he restrains them not.

The same rule applies to all the external conduct of a household: attendance on improper amusements, frequenting places where vicious habits are likely to be contracted. Sufficient is a word to

the wise.

But I must hasten to consider the nature of this obligation in a

second aspect.

2. It enjoins on the heads of households the diligent use of all scriptural means to bring those under their care to a saving knowledge of the truth as it is in Christ.

And here it is proper to state a cardinal doctrine, not for the purpose of argument, but to guard against misapprehension. The regeneration of the heart is the work of the Holy Spirit. To present and urge the duty of parents, guardians, and masters, is not to question in the slightest degree this truth, which is affirmed by

Scripture and facts.

No one in so many words questions the propriety of a religious education in the household; but the danger is, that in this age of cheap religious books, of Sabbath-schools, and other means of religious instruction, we shall depart from the plan of God, ordained as of perpetual force. We are liable, in our practice, to place the plan of Raikes above the plan of God, and to commit to other teachers the work which belongs to the head of the family. is just as radically a departure from the right way, as would be a benevolent plan to intrust the clothing and feeding of our families to a few kindly-disposed persons. This feeding and clothing of children in the wholesale way proposed by some modern philanthropists, is just as rational as to commit the religious training of a household solely to Sabbath-school teachers and preachers of the gospel. In its proper place and relations, each of these instrumentalities is vastly important; but when either of them supplants the home instruction, its results are evil, with slight mitigation. Jehovah is perfect, and he knew the wants of man as well when he gave his commandments to Moses, as he knows them now. He did not commission his servant to organize Sabbath-schools in

which the young might learn the dealings of God with their fathers. Such a course would have sunk the nation into a horde of ignorant and unfeeling barbarians, out of whose minds, in a few generations, the recollections of those stirring events should have died. Jehovah understood the nature of man when he organized the means of keeping the Exodus fresh in the minds of his people. Accordingly, he constituted each head of a household an oracle to answer the inquiries of the thoughtful, and to impart religious in-

struction to all.

Here is the institution, the home-school, as it came from the forming hand of perfect wisdom. "Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord; and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words which I command thee this day shalt be in thine heart; and thou shalt teach diligently to thy children, and shall talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and upon thy gates." (Deut. vi. 4-0.) Here are words which are redolent of honor. They savor altogether of honor. The father is the teacher, and his business is not to be given into the hands of an hireling, or even some benevolent How lifeless any school compared with this, in which the living realities of truth perfume the atmosphere, and lend a savor alike grateful and efficient! We cannot too much admire the wisdom of this arrangement, nor too closely imitate it in the religious education of our families.

"Would God" this sacred institution were revived into its ancient dignity and power; when religion should be taught at home; when the first lessons of truth should be blended with the fondlings of our fancy, and the more sedate endearments of youth, when the secret courtesies of life should become a gentle but mighty instrumentality in preserving the feet of children from the ways of sin. But how often is it, that fathers are more ready to talk of God and heaven to strangers than to their children! How often does family worship become either a formal, or else tedious exercise, the influence of which is to chill, and not to warm the hearts of the young! How often whole families grow up and leave the fire-side of home, without having enjoyed any systematic means put forth for their salvation! The Sabbath school, the Bible class, the pulpit, and the casual visit of the pastor, become practically the supplanters of home, or rather the meagre resorts to which we are compelled to fly, instead of being what they ought to be, the potent auxiliaries of

the more potent influences of home.

Oh could we know that all parents in the church are in faith seeking to answer this home responsibility, many anxieties about the future condition of the church would be spared; many parents would not be mourning over their unregenerate offspring who have reached mature years; many heads of households would not look with shuddering apprehension back at those once in their employ or under their care, who have not only left their families unconverted, but without any well-ordered effort on their part to that end.

The nature of this responsibility, plainly then, is such, that every head of a household is bound to employ at home all proper means, to lead each one committed to his care to Christ, whether he be a heathen, a Romanist, an infidel, his own child, or a stranger sojourning within his gates. The head of the family is the shepherd of that flock, and a heavy woe shall overtake the shepherd through whose unfaithfulness any member of that flock perishes.

Let fathers pray, teach, and act at home, as though they stood at the very sources of power, and held the keys of heaven. may be grateful for the instructions of the sanctuary and the Sabbathschool, but they are not to commit their jewels altogether to other workmen however skilful. None can feel for them as parents ought to feel, nor labor as they ought to labor, that these jewels may shine in the diadem of Christ. Let strangers manage your property, Christian parents, for even though they rob you of it all, the loss can be repaired or endured, but over these immortal souls, which God has intrusted to you, hold the power yourselves, and see that the Lord of glory is honored in their salvation, by your faithful fulfilment of those conditions which are necessary to secure the efficient workings of the Holy Spirit. Begin with your lisping infants, cause light to dawn on their hearts early, and gently draw Secure the might of prayer, remembering how them to Christ. infinitely willing God is to grant his Holy Spirit. Work early and late and diligently in this enterprise, and prove God herewith, if he will not grant you the desires of your heart in the conversion of each member of your household.

From these trains of thought we may infer,

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1. The immense responsibility of being the head of a household. The relation is connected with all that is good and excellent in this world, and desirable in the world to come. Every child, every servant, every dependant, augments the responsibility, until every such person may well cry out, "Who is sufficient for these things?" Let every head of a family enjoin it upon himself to ponder this responsibility in all its greatness, its issues of eternal life and death, and then set himself with earnestness and prayer to the work assigned him, as one who must give account to God for one of the most momentous trusts ever committed to a sinful, fallible, and weak steward.

2. The importance of the household institution. It is God's ordained school for the religious education of our race. And in that school some of the greatest and most useful of men have been trained to fill high stations. Moses, the adopted son of a princess, was not educated without the aid of his pious mother—God

plainly indicating by this, that "all the learning of the Egyptians" could not compensate the loss of this influence. Samuel was the child of prayer, whose heart was regenerated while he was yet a babe, and Timothy could bear witness to the faith of his "grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice." And as it were to impress this magnificent truth most deeply on the head of every household. to show in what esteem God holds the family school, the child Jesus was educated in it, and went forth from its sacred precincts to do the will of his Father, and to make an atonement for the sins of the world. If parents wish their sons to resemble a Samuel, a Timothy, or an Edwards, they must lay the foundation for that resemblance in the nursery; they must be, according to divine appointment, God's magistrate to restrain the waywardness of childhood, and God's teacher in justice and judgment; they must be God's ambassador to bear with tearful earnestness the messages of dving love from the Redeemer; they must be like the importunate wrestler with the angel of the covenant, crying out with holy energy, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me" in the salvation of these immortal souls! Oh, be faithful at home, and God will honor you as he did Abraham, and not curse you as he did You shall perpetuate the blessings of redemption to other generations, instead of sending on your posterity such withering curses as fell on the descendants of Eli.

3. The neglect of this principle is the undoubted cause of ruin to many children of pious parents. Hophni and Phinehas, with their posterity, were the victims who perished in consequence of this, and it is to be feared many since their day and for the same reason have raised fruitless lamentations in the world of despair. And now, let me earnestly inquire, has this congregation no Eli, with children doomed to eternal darkness because their parents restrain them when they make themselves vile? Say, fathers, shall any of your children be cursed with a curse, a withering curse, an ever-abiding curse, because their father was an Eli?

4. We see also wherein consists the true hope of the Church. It is in the right education of children at home. By this, I do not say it would not be a cause of joy here, as well as in heaven, if the adults were converted. Would it might be done speedily! And yet were a whole generation of such brought into the Church, what a vast difference would there be between them and a generation indoctrinated in infancy, and so trained that the Holy Spirit might consistently implant true grace in their hearts, and thus, from the first, piety become the habit of heart and life? Our true hope is found in coming back to the scriptural plan of religious education. The hearts of children must be moulded, and their habits formed. We must fulfil the conditions rendering it consistent for the Holy Spirit to engraft true religion on their hearts, so that manhood shall find them like holy plants in the Church, bending under the delicious fruits of holiness, rather than as trees grown up to a maturity of evil,

whose wide-spreading branches must be cut away in order to graft in the scions of piety and holiness, or else to be cut down as cum-

berers of the ground, and burned with unquenchable fire.

Mothers, I beseech you to impress piety on the babes in your arms, and the children at your side. Fathers, I beseech you to breathe religion into these young hearts, which daily are drinking in lessons of some kind from your eyes, your lips, and your actions. Oh, parents, suffer not your children to depart from the fire-side altar without knowing, as Hannah did, that they are growing before the Lord. With the divine assistance, so freely promised, and so faithfully given, you can accomplish much. Work, then, "while it is called to-day, for the night cometh, in which no man can work."

XXIV.

### DAILY BREAD.

#### BY REV. GARDINER SPRING, D.D.

"Give us this day our daily bread." This prayer regulates the amount of our wants, and the measure of our desires. We are instructed to ask only as we need; there is danger in asking more. God may give more, but it is not safe to ask for more, lest he should say of us as he did of his restive and grasping people of other days; "I gave them their request, but sent leanness into their souls."

Wealth is desirable, not for its own sake, nor merely for the wants it supplies. In itself it is an abstract imaginary thing, and where it is possessed, not unfrequently creates more wants than It is desirable to augment influence and extend the facilities of doing good. That accomplished statesman and jurist, the late William Wirt, a name that will long be illustrious and venerated in American history, on this topic makes the following touching observation: - "Excessive wealth is neither glory nor happiness. The cold and sordid wretch who thinks only of himself; who draws his head within his shell and never puts it out, but for the purpose of lucre and ostentation; who looks upon his fellow-creatures, not only without sympathy, but with arrogance and insolence, as if they were made to be his vassals, and he to be their lord; as if they were made for no other purpose than to pamper his avarice, or to contribute to his aggrandizement; such a man may be rich, but, trust me, he can never be happy, nor virtuous, nor great. There is in fortune a golden mean, which is the appropriate region of virtue and intelligence. Be content with that; and if the horn of plenty overflow, let its droppings fall upon your fellow-men; let them fall like the droppings of honey in the wilderness, to cheer the faint and weary pilgrim."

It is a sad thought that wealth is considered essential to distinction. It is not so. 'The voice of conscience, the voice of reason, the voice of God announces it not so. Wealth alone is not worth living for. Sigh not for wealth. Envy not the splendor of the affluent. The most wealthy are often most in want. "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." No wise man will ever venture to pray that he might be rich. Let a man be thankful, if by exemplary diligence, he can procure a comfortable living; if with this he can be cheerful and happy, he has the earnest of more, and what is of much greater consequence, he has the pledge that more will not be his ruin.—Dr.

Springs' Discourses.

### XXI.

## JUST MEN MADE PERFECT.

## BY REV. GEORGE POTTS, D.D.,

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"But ye are come-to the spirits of just men made perfect."-HEB. xii. 23.

Between the dispensation of the Law, and that of the Gospel, there is an intimate connection, yet a manifest difference. The connection is like that which the beginning of a thing has with the end of it. The one was a preparation for the other, and bore the same relation to the other, as the breaking up of the field and the deposit of the winter grain in its furrows, bears to the golden harvest which is to be gathered under the heat of summer. We may ask, why the purposes of Jehovah toward his church should not have been accomplished without any such preparatory process: but this is like asking why the child was not born a man, or the Let it suffice to say that the Law of Progress has seed a tree. been stamped upon the moral and natural worlds for reasons which can even now be vindicated as wise and good; and much more, when the light of the heavenly future is made to fall upon the divine plans. But this, by the way. It is certain that the principles and designs of God's government of this world, have been progressively unfolded in its history, and that the full light of the evangelic dispensation had its beginning in the dim morning of the legal dispensation, in which were seen only the shadows of good things to come.

But if there be this intimate connection between the law and the gospel, there is also, as we have said, a manifest difference between them, amounting, in some things, even to contrast. Just so far as the first discoveries of a Redeemer went, so far the gospel was preached before unto Abraham, and the blessings of the plan by which sinful men were justified through faith, were secured and enjoyed by ancient believers. But, the brightness of the meridian day, is very different from the dimness of the morning twilight. The uncertain traveller fears the possible dangers of his road, and even harmless objects seem distorted and threatening. This is always more or less true of a state of imperfect knowledge: a timid imagi-

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nation will often conjure up more dangers than really exist. But in respect to the imperfect knowledge of the first dispensation, there was room for more than the workings of a timid imagination. There was, in fact, a stern and awful severity in the revelations of the divine law and justice to ancient Israel, which made them oftentimes very appalling, especially to such as did not penetrate the purposes of mercy which lay hid in the prophecies and ceremonies of the Old Testament Church. The law more than the gospel—the just indignation of God against sin, more than the mercy of God toward the sinner, characterized that dispensation; and of consequence, the experience even of the devout worshipper, par-

took more of 'the spirit of bondage.'

In the well-known passage of which the text forms a part, the apostle points out the contrast between the two dispensations in this respect. On the one hand, he reminds the Hebrew Christians that they are not brought by the gospel into the midst of the appalling wonders which accompanied the reannouncement of the broken but changeless law of Jehovah: flames of fire, and blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and blasts of a trumpet, and an awful voice, speaking awful words: all of them tokens of authority, power and justice which caused even the man of God to say, "I exceedingly fear and quake." Over-topping Sinai with its terrors, they were summoned to behold Mount Zion, 'eternal sunshine resting on its head,' and, spreading on all sides of it, the heavenly city, the new Jerusalem, the beauty of holiness, whose glory all the symbols of earth fail to describe. Instead of terror-stricken Israelites, who entreated that the voice of words should not speak again its unendurable threatenings, they were bidden to behold an innumerable company of angels, their countenances radiant with joy, as they looked into the grand mystery of redemption: and mingling with them, in holy brotherhood, the general assembly and church of the first-born enrolled as citizens of heaven. Instead of God the Judge executing justice against transgressors, they were called to behold God the Judge of all surrounded by the ransomed and perfected spirits of just men: and finally—giving lustre to all, because the author of the reconciliation by which these once repellant elements were harmonized—they are directed to look upon Jesus, the Mediator of this New Covenant, whose blood of sprinkling spake better things than the blood of Abel.

That the apostle means to present these things in contrast, there can be no doubt. Nor is the object he has in view at all doubtful. He aims to animate the soul with all the hopeful emotions which such an attractive group of objects would naturally awaken. Courage, joy and peace in believing, must follow from steadily contemplating the array of blessings provided in the New Covenant; and in the hope of at last participating in the fulness, the believing Hebrew to whom he was writing, would find the best support under

the persecutions to which his faith was then exposing him.

Out of this brilliant collection of evangelic glories, I have selected one—with the hope that a more particular consideration of it than we should be able to give, were we to notice each of the features of the picture, may animate our souls also, with similar anticipations. Our visit, to-day, shall be to heaven. And glad are we to get away, for a season, from the sights and sounds of the world we live in; for though a prison of hope, it is still a prison. We are not at home: we are not come to our heritage—and it is only wonderful that we should not, much oftener than we do, look forward with delight to the day of our discharge. It is for the purpose of quickening your desires, that we now call upon you, my brethren, to consider the holy group of just men made perfect, into communion with whom faith brings us.

The subject before us, invites our attention—

I. To the reality;

II. To the foundation; and

III. To the nature of the condition enjoyed by 'the spirits of just men made perfect.'

I. The reality of their condition calls for a brief notice.

The first thing the mind needs to be assured of, is the fact of an immortal and spiritual future. All speculation as to its nature must be comparatively useless and inoperative, until we have attained to the conviction that it is a great truth—a certainty, not a mere possibility—a reality, not a dream of a hopeful imagination. And to reach such a conviction, so that it may act upon us with a force as great as the assurance we all feel that the sun will rise tomorrow, ought to be a principal aim of the soul. The more positive and definite our faith is in the glorious fact, that "there remaineth a rest for the people of God," the more will all our movements harmonize with the requirements of the Gospel which reveals it. The evidence upon which this truth is established, addresses itself to the whole man, to the heart as well as to the understanding. If I am to debate the question with any one, upon the ground of mere reason, I should feel that much of the success of the argument must depend upon the degree in which the higher instincts of human nature are in active operation within him. If he has trained his understanding altogether in the school of material science, and much more, if he has educated himself in the school of sensuality, I should feel that the doctrine of a future spiritual holy life would have but a feeble hold upon his belief, because in either of the supposed cases, the moral instincts of the soul are deadened by neglect or abuse, and the doctrine is deprived of the powerful testimony which these instincts give. While on the other hand, if, as you will all admit, the highest specimens of our human nature are precisely those in whom the mental and moral powers have been most harmoniously developed, it is no small presumptive proof of immortality, that it is with such minds that the argument for the perpetuity of our nature is most powerful. The impulse of Hope which prompts us to look for something good, and of Fear, which apprehends something evil, both point to the future. The warm affections which bind us together in the relations that compose this life, and which make the thought of a final and irreparable breaking of the bonds, appalling; and the inveterate clinging to existence, coupled with longings after a higher state of knowledge, purity and happiness, what are these, but so many witnesses to the truth, that "though a man die, yet shall he live again?" In all these, (as in other respects that we might name,) it is true, that

"nothing this life unriddles, but the next."

It is to this class of evidences that the word of God does most powerfully appeal. Our faith in the reality of the future life of the people of God-here called "just men made perfect"-does not rest exclusively upon a divine declaration of the fact, in the shape of a logical proposition :- That we have, and if we had no other evidence of the fact, that would be enough. But in giving that assurance, the word of God does not limit itself to a bare affirmation of it,-but, taking it for granted rather, it weaves it into every discovery it makes of the character and will of God, and the relations of man. All is made to bear upon the grand fact that he is immortal. This lies at the basis of accountability. It is no less presupposed in the Law than in the Gospel. For when it is said that Jesus Christ brought life and immortality to light, it is not meant that he was the first to reveal this truth to the world, but only that he most fully exposed to view the nature of immortal life. and especially the conditions upon which it might be secured. We must turn then to the process by which the gospel brings out into active existence the noblest and purest traits of our nature, if we would know what is the most powerful means of impressing the soul with the certain reality of "the life which is to come." By delivering man from the defilements of sin, the gospel ennobles him, and this most effectually puts upon him the stamp of immortality: so that the bare suspicion that one thus ennobled by communion with God, and filled with divine aspirings, is to perish at death, is too revolting to be endured for a moment. It puts the doctrines of God's benevolence and justice, yea, of his very being, into the same vessel with the doctrine of a future retribution, so that if the latter be wrecked upon the shoals of unbelief, the former must be also. It calls upon the parent, the child, the friend, to believe and feel this truth, by appealing to the horror which chills the soul at the bare suggestion that the loved ones who are departed are utterly perished, and that nothing remains of them but the dust of their graves. It asks the Christian believer, struggling with evil and longing for higher reaches in holiness, whether he can credit for a moment the belief that prayer and hope are chimeras. summons us to the bed of death, where gleams of holy confidence in the future are seen shining through the chinks of the frail tabernacle; it takes us to the funeral pile of the martyr, and to the deep dungeons and the dens and caves of the earth, to behold the victims of injustice and cruelty which no human law could restrain nor punish; and surrounded by these witnesses, it leaves us to feel that the condition of perfectness now enjoyed by the "just," is not a less substantial reality, than this present condition of imperfection, in which they once "groaned, being burdened."

II. Let us now proceed to consider the foundation of the heavenly perfectness of the spirits of just men into whose communion we

are brought by the gospel.

This is sufficiently indicated by the word here employed to characterize them. They are called "just" men, a title which, when used in Scripture, has a much larger sense than when used in common speech. In the latter case, it indicates simply an adherence to the laws of equity between man and man, and he is called a "just" man who does not defraud nor injure in any way, his fellow-man. But the scriptural sense of this important word is, conformity to all the laws of God, and therefore it covers as well our duties to God, as those we owe to man. Moreover, in the duties we owe to man, it embraces as well the obligations of benevolence as those of strict equity. In this primary sense of the word "just," and its equivalent, "righteous," those only can claim the appellation, whose works of piety toward God, and of benevolence and justice toward man, are perfectly conformed to the two tables of the Law.

You will ask me, are there, have there ever been, any such upon earth? And the answer must be now, what it was in all former days—(we give it in the language of the word of God)—"there is not a just man upon earth, who doeth good and sinneth not; there is none just, (righteous) no, not one;" and our observation confirms the truth of the awful declaration. So that if a perfect personal conformity to the righteous Law of God be a necessary condition of the entrance of men into the company of heaven, we may

again ask, who can hope for admission?

This view of the condition of all men, in the eye of God's Law, makes it indispensable to bring in that other sense of the word "just," which is known only in the word of God, and according to which it is synonymous with the word "justified." A believer can be called just only in this scriptural sense. He is a justified man, just by faith; declared "just" in the eye of the Law, not because he is so inherently, but by the gracious imputation to him of a justness (righteousness) not his own but another's, even Christ Jesus, the end of the Law for justness (righteousness) to every one that believeth. By the Divine grace the merit of the works and sufferings of the surety is counted to him for justness (righteousness) and on that account he is called and treated as "just" in the view of the Law.

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You see then that the peculiar provisions of the Redemption plan. where justice and compassion join in their divinest forms, constitute the foundation of the heavenly perfection now enjoyed by the spirits of "just" men. For the truth of this view, (were we to undertake the duty of arguing it at length,) we should be obliged to refer you to the whole economy of God; to the gospel representations of the fall and ruin of man, and the distinct declaration that he is saved by grace, through the Redemption which is in Christ We might (were it needful) show how this truth is involved in the glory of the cross: how God set forth the Mediator to be a propitiatory sacrifice, for the express purpose of declaring his own "justness" in the very act of remitting past sins, so that he might be "just" in the act of justifying the ungodly who believe in Jesus. (Rom. iii. 20-31.) We will not, however, vindicate this truth from the sophisms of self-righteousness, for it is self-righteousness after all which underlies all the violent opposition which this "offence of the cross," has met with from moralism, and ritualism under various forms. If there be any here who still doubt that it is of such "just" souls that the general assembly and church of the first-born is composed, we shall content ourselves with summoning themselves to testify. Hear their own lips renounce all reliance upon "their own righteousness:" bowing before the Throne, this is their doxology: "Unto him that loved us and hath washed us from our sins in his own blood, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever." Nor is this the doxology of a part only, but of all. one self-delivered soul, not one who does not count himself a monument of grace, can be found among all the children of the fall, who now are or ever will be part of that blessed company. Each one of them bears the name of "God and of the Lamb" upon his forehead, (Rev. xxii. 4:) and will throughout eternity delight to ascribe every thrill of joy, every honor, every holy affection which enters into his perfectness, to "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."

· III. The nature of this perfectness next demands our notice.

1. Need I say that it is a holy perfection? In the economy of God's moral government, holiness is as necessary to a perfect condition, as heat is necessary to animal or vegetable life. The enjoyments which are found disjoined from this moral purity, are factitious and perishable. Holiness is the crowning glory of God. This gives lustre to his power and knowledge. This makes Heaven. I know that men are not ready to take this view. In their eyes, Genius, Intelligence, Power, are the primary objects of attraction; but in the eyes of angels, Holiness transcends them all. Not insensible to the other glories of the Godhead, but more overwhelmed with the bright atmosphere of holy purity through which they view them, they are represented as crying continually, not "mighty and wise art Thou," but "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty."

And when we, my hearers, see all things through this medium, as the saints made perfect do, we too will sing thus. Oh! for such "a faculty divine!" Let us pray for it, and strive to reach it. Why should we allow ourselves to be so governed by what is seen and felt by the outward sense—as if we belonged to the sensuous who could see nothing even in an angel, but the bloom upon his wings? The highest forms of material glory, are less than the spiritual. What is a jewelled crown to the soul which shines through the eyes of him who wears it? What is an universe of material grandeur, to one single spiritual essence in whom the intelligence and purity of God are reflected?

When upon earth, those now perfect spirits longed for this chiefly; and could we now hear the holy Psalmist, we should find his song praising the grace which had rewarded those aspirations which, while he was here below, proved him to be a child of God, as when he cried, "I shall be satisfied when I awake in thy likeness." And the disciple whom Jesus loved, could we single out his voice from that choral harmony, we should find it one of thanksgiving for the fulfilment of the confidence he thus beautifully expressed, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God: but it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like

him."

2. The perfection we are called to contemplate is a perfection of intelligent activity. The most that has been disclosed concerning the heavenly state, is its holiness. But into the conception of holiness there necessarily enters the idea of enlarged knowledge and active service. Holiness is not simply a negative condition, it is indeed the negative of sin, but it is more; it is the spring of the soul, its balance-wheel, its inspiration, its vital atmosphere, and especially will it prove to be a fountain-head of inexhaustible energies, where it is complete, as it is in the saints made perfect. If, even now, its faintest dawnings in the form of godly sorrow for sin, and trembling faith in Christ, rouses the sleeper from the apathy of sin, to the labors and self-denial of the narrow road of duty to God, how much more will he mount as upon eagles' wings, run and not be weary, walk and not faint, when there shall be no more sin to enfeeble his faculties!

They take a very feeble, not to say false, view of the state of perfection, who make repose the predominant thought in their conception of the heavenly world. Such a heaven is akin to that of the false prophet, a condition no higher in dignity than the harem which forms the Mussulman's earthly happiness. It is true that we know but little of the forms of activity which a beatified soul shall assume; but this we know, that knowledge is to be acquired, and that implies mental activity; moreover, if angelic beings are employed in active service, there is no reason, at least in the nature of things, why the spirits of just men made perfect may not be. Can any one conceive of Paul, or David, or Isaiah, as fallen into a

passive state of self-enjoyment, which can scarcely escape the charge of sloth? No; there are no spiritual voluptuaries in Heaven. They live! with a vastly increased energy, every moment furnishing new fields for their inquiries, and new calls upon their love and service. Mysteries of nature and grace are to be studied, past history unrolled and pondered, works of love mingling with direct offices of worship. All are busy in knowing, doing and adoring. All are tending forward and upward toward the Infinite in an interminable but unwearying approximation. Without jar, confusion, or hurry, the motion of the soul is the reposing motion of the eagle.

"Ye cannot see The stirring of his wings, and yet he soars."

If now, the emphatic word, 'rest,' so often applied in Scripture to describe the heavenly state, seem to any inconsistent with these

views of a constant activity, let us

3. Consider happiness as part of the perfection of the spirits of just men. We feel as if it were better to be silent here; for who can describe that exceeding and eternal weight of glory? Contrast, is our only means of reaching any suitable conception of the greatness and pureness of the joy that animates every soul which forms one in that throng of the justified and perfected. Contrast, I say: what this present world is, that heaven is not. Take the history of the present life: is it not the history of a discipline, which involves fighting within and fears without? Exclude then from your present Christian experience all painful misgivings and doubts, all anxious watchings, all struggles with sin in its numerous forms of temptation, all battling with ourselves, the evil one, and a false-hearted world: all efforts to drag along the reluctant soul in the way of duty: take away all carking care about the future, all alternations of hope and disappointment: remove the idea of separation from beloved friends, who, when torn up from our side, like trees torn from the soil, leave a yearning void which cannot be refilled: imagine all the pain and shame of persecution for Christ's sake, all sights and sounds of anguish which assail us from the crowded haunts of life, taken away from the experience of the Christian life, and nothing left but a holy residuum of elevating and unchecked communion with God and holy beings-and you can easily see how the promise of 'rest' shall be made good to the people of God. It is rest from sin first, and then from sinbegotten sorrow, and trials which sin has made necessary, and toils which sin has made irksome. You can also easily perceive, how such rest, which thus enters necessarily into the happiness of the blessed, is by no means incompatible with the fact of a continued and happy activity. The hour which admitted the spirits of just men into it, was, to them, as the sunset of painful, and the sunrising of joyful labor. Their happiness consists in the divine harmony in which all objects and persons shall move in relation to each other, and around the central sun, like the bright orbs which fill the heavens, ceaselessly revolve in their appointed courses, yet in such harmonious order, that they seem to be in beautiful repose upon the bosom of immensity.

Into the presence of these perfected saints are you come this day.

From this view of their character and condition, learn-

First, That the glory of the world that now is, is not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed. Duty and interest therefore both adjure us to prize more highly our heavenly citizenship, and to declare plainly by our lives, that 'we seek a country.' The degree of satisfaction with which we look upwards to those who, having passed over Jordan, are now safe in the land of promise, will always be in proportion as we love the road they travelled. The pageant of the world—every day declares it—passeth away. 'What then have we any more to do with its idols?' What communion hath our light with its darkness, our Christ with its Belial, Moloch or Mammon? Oh my brethren! take care not to live as if you thought it a fine thing to be on equally good terms with both worlds, but 'be ye followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.'

Secondly, Our subject teaches us to rejoice that the soul is not tied to an immortal body like that which now holds it prisoner. Oh! what if it were! Blessed be God, this rough husk shall not forever hold the gem. We would not encourage the morbid disgusts with which some persons brood over the evils of the present condition, and the morbid attraction which draws them only to the darker mysteries of life. This world is the theatre upon which the mighty work of Redemption is acted, and by that work life is We dare not complain at the hidden secrets of providence, knowing that sin explains the problem of sorrow, for with such an interpretation of its mysteries, coupled with an assurance of a future reckoning and restoration, we may well bear our lot with patient humility. While we have duties to perform, and while earthly mercies mingle with earthly ills, far from us be the proud and rebellious disgusts of those who abuse their Maker, by abusing the life in which he has been pleased to place us for a season.

Yet, with all these qualifications—reduce the evils endured till they are only half in number, and quadruple the blessings of the happiest earthly lot,—a submissive but decided preference for the nobler and better life of heaven will predominate in a mind thoroughly Christian. Make the best of it, our present dwelling is but a tent, rent in many places, through which the wind, rain and cold will find their way. We have given the reason. This is a

sinful life. Hence its troubles:

"Hence all thy groans and travail pains, Hence, till thy God return, In wisdom's ear thy blithest strains, Oh nature, seem to mourn!"

To shake off the last fetter of sin—to become instead of a child, a man—to see and know, as he is seen and known—our only wonder is that the believer's desires are not more thoroughly fired with the 'far better' prospect of being 'with Christ,' and that his language is not oftener, 'I would not live alway.' Thanks be to God, that the immortality promised to us, is not a perpetuation of the present condition.

Thirdly, I exhort you to take large views of the communion of saints. It is good not only to look around us to our fellow-believers, but upwards to those who, having 'fought the good fight,' are now triumphing in the presence of Christ. They too are one with us, for they belong to the Head. Yea—(I love the charming

words)

"All the children of our Lord
In heaven and earth are one.
One family, we dwell in him,
One church, above, beneath,
Tho' now divided by the stream,
The narrow stream of death.
One army of the living God
At his command we bow,
Part of the host has crossed the flood,
And part is crossing now."

Oh blessed host! which no man can number.

Finally, I turn to you my world-loving, impenitent hearers, and bid you learn the conditions upon which alone you can join that general assembly of enrolled citizens of heaven. You must be "just" men, in the gospel sense of that pregnant word. You must be believers, subjects and followers of Christ. You must find that one road which led them safe to heaven; and every step of which

is sprinkled with the blood of expiation.

There is a religion which you must begin by renouncing. It is the religion which alone can be called, the Catholic or Universal, for it alone has all the signs which have been falsely claimed for Popery. It alone has been at all times, in all places, and embraced by all! It has been found under a Pagan, a Mohammedan, and Christian dress. We have all of us known it from experience, and I fear that some of you, even now, know no other. Do you ask what I mean? I mean the religion of self-righteousness, self-wisdom and self-strength. Whether it hold up its head in the scornful indifference of rationalism, or creep upon the ground in superstitious fear, counting its prayers and scourging its flesh, it has equally in view self-salvation. Under all its disguises, with all the elastic principles by which it can so easily fit itself to all the forms of human corruption, it must be abandoned, for it is the enemy of

God, and the rejecter of 'the grace that is in Christ Jesus.' The gates of the heavenly city are barred against it, just men made perfect abhor it, and you, my hearer, must find your way to the foot of the cross and with penitent shame renounce it.

Which may God grant-and to the name of the Father, Son and

Holy Ghost shall be all the glory. Amen.

#### XXII.

#### THE IMPORTANCE OF LITTLE THINGS.

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"Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth."-James iii. 5.

The theme of this discourse is the importance of little things. It is an observation neither the less true nor the less striking, because of its standing upon the sacred records of religion, "behold! how great a matter a little fire kindleth!" Why, my hearers, it was but an echo of this thought that was presented in that beautiful passage of a German writer who compares nature to a great poet, who produces his noblest efforts with the fewest means: a great thought and a few household words to clothe it in. If so, then how magnificently poetic must have been the mind of the old Hebrew lawgiver, Moses, who gave to the world that sentence unparalleled for sublime simplicity, "God said, let there be light; and light was!"

Ordinarily, when men undertake some great enterprise, they resort to means great and complicated, in proportion to the magnitude of the work contemplated. When, therefore, any result is accomplished through the agency of means apparently trivial and inadequate, it always exalts our ideas of the skill of the contriver! But simplicity of means in the production of great results, is characteristic of the great system of nature; or, to speak more intelligibly and more correctly, is characteristic of the operations of God. The great Author of Nature ever operates by little causes. The entire universe teems with illustrations of this truth. Everywhere, mighty effects spring from small and seemingly inadequate causes. Of this truth, each one of the great laws of nature is demonstrative. Witness—

1st. The single principle of gravitation—that mysterious influence which pervades every part of the known universe; which fixes the sun in his orbit, retains the stars in their places; which gives stability to the earth and motion to the sea; which renders the huge mountains stationary, and causes the rain to drop on the fields, makes the brooks and rivulets to course through the valleys, and

hasten to mingle in the waters of the deep. It is this influence, everywhere diffused, that like a direct exertion of divine power, keeps the planets each in its due position and regular order, so that their motions are performed without clashing or confusion. 'Tis this that gives stability to our buildings, and safety to our footsteps; 'tis this that causes the ship to float buoyant upon the surface of the ocean, and this that carries the anchor swiftly down to the bottom. Tis this that poises the eagle on steady wing high in the air, and this brings the arrow, however vigorously propelled heavenward, back to the ground. Search where you will, in heaven or on earth, on the lofty mountain or the wide plain, in the deep pit or in the mighty ocean, and everywhere you find this one simple principle operating, and producing results the most surprising, and at times, even seemingly contradictory:

But 2d. Other laws of nature, as they are termed, are nothing but the operation of causes equally simple and equally powerful, as the expansibility of vapors, gases, and all aëriform fluids.

To this simple property of expansibility it is owing that, like as when water is heated over fire, it passes off rapidly in the form of steam, rising in the atmosphere, and unless collected in appropriate vessels, is soon lost to our perceptions—so, also, from the vast extent of surface presented to the sun's rays, in the ocean, and the countless bays, lakes, gulfs, and rivers everywhere traversing the land, vapor is perpetually rising in the atmosphere, floating lightly far away to distant regions, settling around the summits of mountains, and feeding the springs of innumerable brooks that roll down the mountain's side, and gradually swell into large rivers; or, it hovers over the earth and descends in fertilizing showers to bless the labors of the husbandman, and supply food to every living thing.

To the operations of the same apparently trivial cause, we can trace some of the most remarkable phenomena of nature. Hence originate tempests, that blacken the heavens and deluge the earth with showers; and fierce winds that rouse the placid sea to wild commotion, and prostrate the tall trees of the forest, purifying the atmosphere and contributing to the health and happiness of mankind, whose proudest works they seem so often to menace with destruc-To the same cause, also, we trace the desolating earthquakes and the terrific volcanic eruptions. In those vast laboratories that God has built deep within the bowels of the earth, where fierce fires glow, and exhaustless materials are laid up to supply them, vapors and gases of various kinds, and in immense quantities, are generated, and are perpetually accumulating now in one place and now in another. When this accumulation reaches a certain point, the expansive force overpowers the resistance offered by the superincumbent mass of earth and rock, and mountain and sea, that opposes its escape; the surface of the earth heaves and trembles; the sea itself rushes suddenly on the before dry land, or retires back towards the great deep, and islands appear and mountains rise-or they sink, and give place to wide, yawning chasms. The pent-up vapors escape; the fiery fluid whence it had originated, is disgorged in streams of burning lava; and then gradually the tremblings of the earth abate; its heavings cease—and tranquillity again rests on the scene of desolation, where lie the ruins of cities and palaces, of gardens and vineyards, the work of busy man, wrought in years of toilsome labor by thousands combined; but destroyed in a moment by the operation of one little cause, under the direction of the great Architect of the universe, who seeth not as man seeth, and whose ways are above our ways, as the heavens are higher than the earth!

But 3d. In other instances, this peculiarity in the divine proce-

dure is apparent.

The mariner who navigates the immense Pacific, and some parts of the Indian Ocean, finds great changes perpetually taking place. Where once lay the bright waters of a smooth sea, the white foam now tosses and breakers roar, for reefs and rocks have there risen up; and where, but lately, ran along ledges of sunken rocks, betrayed only by the dashing of the breakers, fair islets now stand covered with verdure, shaded by the tall palm-tree, and in some instances, affording secure habitation to birds and beasts, and even to man. Careful research has ascertained that these new creations, as they may be designated, are the work of countless myriads of little insects with which these seas abound, and which labor continually with incessant activity, raising up from the fathomless deep, or at least from the summits of deeply submerged mountain ranges, pile after pile of coral rock, a substance often as hard as marble, and a secretion from their own countless little bodies. Their work they carry forward with ceaseless accumulation till it reaches the surface of the sea, when it stops. But, on this naked surface of rock, a coating of light soil speedily appears, vegetation commences, and soil still further accumulates, until where once rolled the ocean wave unbroken and smooth, islands separately or in groups, spread their rich beauties to the sun, and become the resting-place and the home of man. And all these amazing results, to accomplish the least of which, would baffle the ingenuity and defy the power of the whole human race combined, are brought about by the noiseless and secret, but untiring action of countless millions of little animalculæ, totally unconscious of the nature and the extent of their operations, and hardly holding a place in the scale of animated beings. So obvious is it that in the works of nature, God operates by little causes, accomplishing great results by apparently inadequate

But 4th. In the movements of Providence towards men, a similar

method of operation is apparent.

How often is it found that an event seemingly fortuitous and trivial, leads to consequences of a momentous character. The first interview of Paris, the son of Priam, with the Grecian queen Helen, might have been merely accidental, but it awakened in his bosom a

train of emotion, and it inspired him with purposes which led to the Trojan war, the theme of Homer's muse, and it elicited events which by their influence on that generation, and by the power which the poet's description of them has exerted upon the minds of thousands in every succeeding generation, from Alexander of Macedon to the present day, have contributed, to an incalculable extent, to mould the characters of the great leaders in human affairs, to determine the revolutions of empires, the progress or delay of civilization, and the whole aspect of society. So also in Rome, it was the ill treatment of one woman of lofty spirit, (Lucretia,) that overthrew the monarchy, established the Republic, and planted the seeds of that love of liberty which, for so many ages, influenced the movements of that extraordinary people, and which, to this day, is felt

throughout every region of the civilized world. It was a mere trifle that prevented Oliver Cromwell and several others who afterwards distinguished themselves as his associates, from emigrating to the colonies of the New World some time before the first steps were taken in that revolution which cost the monarch of England his head, expatriated his family, and elevated Cromwell to the seat of highest authority in the nation. 'Cromwell and his friends had engaged their passage to America, and were only awaiting the signal to embark, when, by some caprice of the court, they were prohibited from leaving the country. Had any accident occurred to delay the order of the court, until after they should have commenced their voyage to the American colonies, who can tell how different might have proved the course of events, and how different might have been the aspect of affairs over all Europe at the present hour. It is far from improbable that the destiny of the English nation and of Europe hung upon that single event, the arrival or non-arrival of the court-courier, before the change of wind to favor Cromwell's embarkation. The life of a monarch, and the destinies of a proud nation, hung upon the speed of a horse.

Another striking illustration of the influence of little things, is found in the history of the negro race. The celebrated Bartholomew de las Casas, a Spanish prelate who accompanied Columbus in his second voyage to Hispaniola, and on the conquest of Cuba settled there, moved by compassion for the suffering of the native Indians, who were worked as slaves in the mines by the Spaniards, conceived the idea of sparing this feeble race, that were fast passing away, by substituting negroes, a much more athletic race, and that were to be obtained from the Portuguese settlements on the coast of Africa. After petitioning to the Spanish government successively under Ferdinand, the regent Cardinal Ximenes, and then Charles V., he succeeded. In 1503 a few negro slaves had been sent into St. Domingo, and afterwards Ferdinand allowed the importation of large numbers. The labor of one negro was found equal to that of four Indians. Ximenes discouraged the traffic: Charles V. revived it, and conferred the privilege as a monopoly, on a Flemish favorite. In 1518 the right was sold to some Genoese merchants, who reduced the traffic to a regular system. The French obtained it next, and retained it till it had yielded them a revenue of two hundred and four millions of dollars. In 1713 the English secured it for thirty years. For the last four of these years, Spain purchased the English right for five hundred thousand dollars.

Thus, through the mistaken benevolence of a Spanish priest, a measure was set on foot, which the cupidity of Christian Europe turned into a system of fearful cruelty, a system, by the operation of which the commerce of the world, and the aspect of all civilized society, has been affected. A system, which seems likely, in God's overruling Providence, to convulse one of the mightiest nations on the globe; and eventually to return light and peace, civilization and Christianity on the eighty millions of African tribes. How great a

matter a little fire kindleth.

Another instance. In August, 1799, a French artillery officer, named Bouchard, when digging near Rosetta, in Egypt, for the foundation of a military work, came upon a huge block of basalt, marked with various strange characters, and hieroglyphics. These characters were found to exhibit three inscriptions, in three different characters, one of which proved to be the Greek. This was the celebrated Rosetta stone now in the British museum, which has been the subject of diligent investigation by learned antiquarians of every nation in Europe; and this stone, under the ingenious labors of Young, and Champollion, yielded, by a comparison of the characters found in the different inscriptions, a key to unlock the treasures of ancient wisdom, shut up for so many centuries, under the hieroglyphics of Egypt.

The discovery of a small obelisk on the isle of Philoe, in the Nile, in 1816, by Caillaud, the French traveler, on which was a Greek inscription containing the names of Ptolemy and Cleopatra, greatly aided Champollion in unraveling the mystery. Thus, as the result of the seemingly trivial event of finding an old broken stone at Rosetta, and a little obelisk, years afterwards, at Philoe; the industry of antiquarians was set to work, and that industry has been

crowned with astonishing success.

The inscriptions found on the decaying monuments, and on the frail papyri of Egypt, are now quite intelligible; the ancient records of Egyptian dynasties are rapidly opening to the inspection of all men. Thence, the infidel is drawing largely his materials for renewed assault on the records of revelation; and the Christian is patiently awaiting the issue of a finished discovery among these old monuments, perfectly confident that the *truth* of human records, once fully made out, will fall naturally and inevitably into the train of the handmaids and supporters of revelation.

Little did the French artillery officer dream, when the men working under his direction, first heaved up that dark and mutilated block near Rosetta—that around that old stone, and over its muti-

lated inscriptions, the friends and enemies of the ancient Jewish Scriptures would rally for a long and arduous, and possibly a final conflict, as to the truth of revealed religion. How great a matter

a little fire kindleth.

And often it is seen that some unlooked for, and seemingly trivial event baffles the foresight of men, frustrates their plans, and defeats their most important enterprises. A sudden tempest will sometimes scatter and destroy a numerous and well-appointed fleet. The fate of a battle on which are hanging the destinies of empires, will sometimes be decided by a thick mist, a driving storm, or by a random shot which cuts down an experienced leader, and spreads a resistless

panic through his whole army.

In private life, also, results of great magnitude flow from causes apparently insignificant. The flight of a bird, the fall of an acorn from the tree, the course taken by a flash of lightning, or the singing of a tea-kettle over the fire, may give birth to a train of thought in the mind of some quiet observer, that shall lead to conclusions little anticipated, elicit new discoveries in science, and open the way for improvements in art, of the first importance to commerce, and to the practical business of life, and diffuse incalculable benefits

among millions of our race.

Again, the accidental meeting of two entire strangers, may lead to an acquaintanceship that shall ripen into friendship strong and enduring-throw an entirely new aspect over the emotions, the sentiments, the pursuits, and the whole character of both, and send its influence, healthful and cheering, or the reverse, over the whole life, ave, and over the immortal interests of both-possibly even of others with them. Many a well-disposed youth has been led by the influence of a cherished companion, into scenes of gaiety and pleasure, of dissipation and vice. His mind has been poisoned, his principles perverted, his character degraded. While others, by the kind counsel, the cheering influence, and the gentle force of consistent example in a faithful friend, have been strengthened in virtue, habituated to what is good and honorable, and humbled even to seek to obtain the pearl of great price. " He that walketh with the wise men shall be wise, but a companion of fools shall be destroyed." And it is often the merest accident, apparently, which determines whether a youth shall be the companion of wise men, or of fools, whether he shall be honorable and good, or base and worthless, whether he shall be saved or lost forever.

Further illustration of this truth is found, 5th. In the production

of the present moral aspect of mankind.

The moral characteristics of men are certainly very corrupt. An inspired writer has taught us, "the heart of man is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked," and it is certainly true. There is universally prevailing in the world a deep depravity filling the earth with crimes and with sorrow. And yet it was not always thus. The voice of even pagan tradition, and the express testimo-

ny of holy writ, both assure us, that as he came originally from the hands of his Maker, man was good and pure. How, then, was this great change brought about? Revelation teaches, that by one man's disobedience sin entered into the world, and death by sin. It was, then, by the transgression of the one first parent of our race, that the whole multitude of his descendants were made sinners. Trivial as that act may seem, it was the reaching forth of the hand by our first progenitor to pluck and eat the forbidden fruit, which opened the floodgates of evil to inundate a world for many long and successive ages in sin, and sorrow, and suffering. By that one act, our first father Adam degraded his nature, perverted his capacities, and then he transmitted to his posterity, through all their countless generations, a nature corrupt and prone to evil. And to this day, in every corner of our globe, the fruits of that one sin abound. Everywhere, men prove the reality of their descent from the fallen Adam, by evincing, that like him, "they love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil." Sin everywhere prevails, and suffering, and sorrow, and death follow in its train. Yea, the very elements, by their disorder and wild commotion, and by the fearful desolations they oft occasion, seem to proclaim that the physical arrangements in this world are adapted to suit the circumstances of a race frowned on of heaven, for its moral turpitude; all, all telling of the fearful power of that one little cause

> ——" Man's first disobedience, and the fruit Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste Brought death into the world, and all our woe."

But 6th. By another cause, equally unobtrusive and seemingly inadequate, results as great, as vast, as wide-spread, as enduring and as glorious as those flowing from the one last adverted to are disastrous, have been brought about—for,

If by the disobedience of one the many were made sinners, it is also true that, by the obedience of one shall many be made right-

eous.

After the world had, for many long ages, been lying in darkness and in guilt, the shades of moral pollution deepening on every side, there did appear, at length, one man upon earth, whose life was faultless—whose wisdom was matchless—his purity unimpeachable, and whose sufferings, too, notwithstanding his excellence, were rare, unexampled, and to him fatal! Jesus of Nazareth, a dweller in Galilee, and for years traversing the hills and valleys of Judea, visiting its cities, and villages, and places of public resort, is distinguished not only as a teacher of the ignorant, a benefactor to the afflicted, and a pattern of every virtue, but he is presented to us in the amazing relation of the Redeemer of men—the Saviour of the world. In the doings of that one distinguished person, the majesty of heaven, the honor of God's government, and the safety of a world perishing in guilt, are all deeply involved. It is by the spotless excellency of this

one person that the wisdom and the authority of the divine law broken by man, are vindicated! It is through his bitter sufferings that the justice of God maintained its honor, while mercy steps forth to rescue the guilty. It is through his death that life is spread to the perishing. However inadequate may, at first view, appear the means employed, it is nevertheless true, and it accords to the general mode of procedure under the divine government. On the movements of the one man, Jesus Christ, were suspended the destinies of a world. Had he failed in any one point, the darkness of irre-

mediable condemnation had settled on our entire race.

As it is, by his spotless excellence we have not only a bright pattern presented for our imitation in life, but through his blood pardon is by us attainable—through his death eternal life is secured; so that, the doings of this one individual have brought life and immortality to light, and have completely changed the prospects of the whole human race for all coming ages. The work is accomplished: it is fully completed; not a shadow of a doubt can rest upon the question; redemption has been achieved for man by Jesus Christ; pardon and a title to eternal joys in heaven are offered to men however sinful. The boon is freely offered. It has been gained by thousands, and by tens of thousands. Multitudes now on earth are rejoicing in the firm conviction that this boon is theirs even nowthat after a few more years here spent in patient efforts to grow in goodness, they will enter the climes of perfect purity and perfect peace, to dwell there forever. Multitudes now in heaven are surrounding the eternal throne in "the conscious possession of a renovated nature, purified affections, and bliss that is boundless and that shall be eternal!" Aye! in heaven itself, the songs of triumphant thanksgiving to God and the Lamb, (we can almost hear those rapturous sounds as we sit wrapt in devout meditation!) ascribe this amazing result to the doings of Jesus on earth. "Unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, be glory, dominion, and honor forever!"

But once more, 7th. The means still employed to elevate the

moral condition of men are equally characteristic!

It may seem a very small matter that a mother, surrounded by her little ones, watches over them in their sports, heals their little differences, soothes their jealousies, corrects their mistakes, and encourages them with judicious care, to check their tempers, to love the truth, to be kind to one another, to forbear vengeance, and to forgive injuries, imagined or real. Yet small as the matter may appear, this is the process, simple and hidden from the world's view though it be, by which the foundation of all that is noble in principle, dignified in character, and beneficial in conduct, is laid. And to the neglect of this quiet, early discipline, may be traced the instances of gross vice and wild disorder and selfishness, that now and then startle us in the current of life, and spread a poisonous influence far and wide.

It is by imparting knowledge, fortifying the principles and awakening to healthful action the conscience of man, individually, that preparation must be made for the production of right conduct, of great actions, and of characters, and of deeds that shall bless mankind!

So also, in the great enterprise of staying the ravages of sin in society, and recovering a world back to its allegiance to God!

No great array of startling means is employed for this purpose—no lightnings break from heaven, shivering the cover that hides from view the pit of despair—no thunders roll on high, proclaiming the terrors of God's wrath against the wicked—no powerful monarchs are commissioned to treat with men in the name of heaven; no! but the one single instrumentality selected is that of preaching the gospel—of telling men in the plainest manner, and in simple terms, the story of redeeming love, and inviting them to turn to God and live!

The world is arrayed on one side with its pomp, its power, its wealth, its pleasures—with its wisdom, its learning, its fascinating delusions. On the other side, stands the messenger of salvation, pointing to the declarations of eternal truth; pointing to the offer of pardon through the blood of Jesus, and beseeching men to be reconciled to God—to turn from their follies and their sins, and live!—The powerful may look down with contempt, the wise may turn away, the gay may dance by unheeding, and the vicious may scoff! but this simple means has been found amply sufficient!

From the very first, the passions, the prejudices, the interests, and the ancient and cherished superstitions of man were all opposed to the success of the gospel; but in vain. It was first proclaimed in the face of powerful, determined, and organized opposition. But it gained a foothold in society, notwithstanding, and spread its influence, and it has held on its way, onward, onward ever since. The Grecian philosophers mocked when they heard Paul expounding the

Christian doctrine of the resurrection of the dead!

The Roman magistrate, surrounded by all the pomp of office, as the gorgeous procession in his train swept onwards to celebrate some splendid rite in the temples of their idolatry, might have cast a look of contemptuous pity at the little group of obscure Christians met for worship, and whose hymns in honor of the crucified Nazarene, caught his ear as he passed along. If at all aware of the exclusive character of the religion there taught, he might have smiled in derision at the extravagance of the simple fanatics, (as he would probably deem them,) and, glancing his eye proudly at the pageantry around him, and the popularity of the gay mythology he advocated, he might deem it perfectly secure against the influence of a system so obscure, so abhorrent to the prejudices, and so adverse to the cherished indulgences of the powerful people he governed; and yet, ere long, those splendid superstitions tottered and fell before the influence of this new religion, simple as it appeared—un-

obtrusive as were its movements! So true it is, as an apostle once declared, "God hath chosen foolish things to confound the wise, and weak things to confound the mighty." If he would overthrow the monuments of human industry or power, no boisterous convulsions of nature are needed; the workings of little insects, the silent progress of decay, will be enough. If he would punish a rebellious nation, no powerful armies, no formidable fleets, are needed; luxury and pride within itself will accomplish it. There is, then, with these facts in view, something awful in the communication, "I will be to Ephraim as a moth, and to the house of Judah as rottenness!"

In the operation of the great laws of nature—in the production of striking phenomena and desolating convulsions of the elements—in the ceaseless production of the vast submarine structures, on which rest the lovely isles of ocean—in the momentous movements of Providence, controlling the affairs of men, and determining the destiny of empires—in the amazing event which rendered this world a theatre of guilt and woe—in the still more astonishing work of redeeming a ruined world, and opening heaven itself to the hopes of mankind—in the ordinary dispensations of Providence towards men individually—in the dispensation of celestial grace through the Son of God—everywhere and in all things we find the truth broadly illustrated, "Great results flow from little causes." The glorious Ruler of the universe accomplishes the results most amazing by means silent, unobtrusive, and seemingly inadequate; truly, then, "there is no searching his understanding!"

From the array of facts now before us, I infer, 1st. God's agency

is concerned in all events, however minute.

Some persons deem it derogatory to God to suppose that his attention is occupied by little things. In affairs of magnitude he may be interested, but surely not in every little trifle. But, now, this thought is unworthy of God. His mind is so vast and so capacious that it grasps every object with perfect distinctness. His plans are perfect, embracing all events without exception. He is competent to direct all. Not a sparrow falls without Him, and even the very hairs of our heads are all numbered. His plans must embrace all events, for, otherwise, his purposes might be frustrated by some event overlooked as too small for notice, but of which the consequences, (like the circles spreading around the point where a falling pebble meets the surface of the lake,) should continually extend and grow in power as increasing ages move on!

We may infer, again, no event is, properly speaking, insignificant. To us it may appear so, but in reality it is not. The direction taken by a fly may cost the life of the most powerful monarch or the ablest statesman, and plunge whole nations into the horrors of tedious, bloody warfare! The turn we take in a walk, the selection of a book, the direction we give to a conversation, the merest trifle imaginable may throw us into circumstances that will modify our

opinions, give a new impulse to our desires, make for us a powerful friend or an implacable enemy, and give an entirely different tone for good or for evil to our own character and our whole destiny hereafter. Once more: we discern our need of constant guidance from the Most High. He alone fully understands our position, clearly discerns every danger that threatens us, and appreciates our necessities. He alone has power adequate to protect, and wisdom to guide us aright. If He guard us, no danger can overwhelm us; if He sustain, no force can crush us; if He graciously accord his guidance, we are secure—so, at least, thought the royal bard of Is-

rael: "Uphold me, O Lord, and I shall be safe!"

But, further: it certainly is not irrelative to the subject discussed, and I trust it will not be deemed inappropriate to the occasion if I add: "We hence discern also the propriety and value of prayer!" How foolish we should deem the mariner, who, when approaching a coast dangerous from its numerous shoals and reefs and varying currents, around which, moreover, the vessels of a daring foe are hovering, and the gathering tempest is blackening, should persist in refusing the services of an able, and experienced, and faithful pilot, ready and eager to conduct him safely through the devious channels. How foolish the military officer, who, hemmed in by a superior force—a force flushed with victory, vigilant, active, and eager for his destruction, while his own supplies were exhausted, and famine stared him in the face, should refuse to avail himself of trusty guides, offering to conduct his harassed bands by retired passes across the hills to join the distant troops hastening to his relief!

Equally foolish, unreasonable, and disastrous it is, for a frail mortal, a child of sin and sorrow, to refuse applying to the Father of mercies for that aid, that support, that guidance, so appropriate to his exigencies—a guidance that may be obtained, and obtained by all through prayer; and without which, events that any hour may bring forth, shall prove deeply disastrous, nay, irremediably

fatal!

Do you need pardon? It is obtained in prayer. Do you need consolation in affliction? Prayer yields it. Do you need tranquillity of mind and firmness to resist temptation? Prayer, and prayer alone, brings it within your reach. How great a matter a little fire kindleth.

## "ONE THING THOU LACKEST."

#### BY REV. J. M. SHERWOOD,

This was said to an inquiring sinner by one that knew. The character of the inquirer, and of him who pronounced the judgment, and all the circumstances of the case, make it a most impressive and instructive record of human experience in the matter of eternal salvation.

Never was the momentous question, "What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" asked under more favorable circumstances—never did an inquirer seem nearer to the kingdom of heaven—never were hope and promise more suddenly and utterly blighted—never was there a sadder and more appalling sequel to a sinner's period

of conviction and seeking after the kingdom of God.

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He came to Christ, not with a question of curiosity, or casuistry, or strife, but with the one all-embracing and infinitely momentous question, which related to his personal salvation. There was very much in his person and character-very much in his manner of seeking-to warrant hope in his case-almost enough to justify one in pronouncing with certainty upon his salvation. He came with a serious question, and did proper reverence to Jesus Christ. He began to seek religion in early life, for he was yet a young man. He was not above seeking the salvation of his soul, though he was rich-"had great possessions." He was not ashamed to kneel to Christ, and that in the public highway, notwithstanding he was a "ruler." He felt in some measure the insufficiency of his righteousness, and his need of something more and better to save him, although he was a very moral, and as a Jew, a strictly religious man, and had kept all the commandments of Moses from his youth His mind was penetrated with the spirit of humility, and with a profound respect for Christ and serious things, as his manner and whole conduct on this occasion abundantly show. He was, beyond a doubt, an honest seeker after the truth. He came burdened with a most weighty and appropriate question, and was anxious to have it answered; he sought the test of this new Teacher who came forth from God; he wanted to know the truth and the whole truth in this case, and he shrunk not from the revelation. And, finally, he was manifestly an earnest seeker after life. For he came "running" to Jesus as if in haste—as if he feared the favorable moment might be lost—as if his mind was wrought up to a high and noble resolve, and his heart impelled by deep conviction. No shame or fear, or sense of guilt could deter him. The Spirit of God was no doubt at work in his soul. It was an hour of intense interest and responsibility to that sinner. Behold him prostrate at the feet of Jesus! Hear the anxious inquiry that falls from his lips! Listen to the kind and gracious words of Jesus, directing a lost and inquiring sin-

ner into the way of life everlasting!

And is such an one wanting? Shall he at last come short, and perish with the silly and stupid multitude? Having reached the very entrance-gate of salvation, will he turn back, and give over seeking? O, the poverty of creature happiness! the insufficiency of creature goodness! the weakness of creature resolves! the uncertainty of creature promise and hope in their best estate! One thing thou lackest. Not yet perfect. One important step still to be taken. One test more to be applied. Ah! and that one thing, was everything to him; to make him perfect he needed the right-eousness of Christ, of which he was entirely destitute; the step to be taken involved the chief sacrifice in his following Christ; the test to be applied would show his utter insufficiency, and blast in death his high-raised hopes, and all his prospects of eternal life.

"Go thy way; sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross and follow me." Jesus knew what constituted that man's IDOL-the real and main difficulty to be met by him in the prosecution of his great inquiry-and he laid his hand upon that idol, and pointed to the required preliminary sacrifice. With a master-hand he laid bare the secrets of that youthful, hoping, and self-confident heart-discovered to him the strength of its love of the world, and the weakness of its outpourings after eternal life with God; and in a moment his radical deficiency of character comes out—he cannot endure the light and demands of that higher revelation which he sought—his resolution fails him—and all is lost. "And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved; for he had great possessions." His "great possessions" were his ruin. He loved them more than he loved God, or eternal life, and he knew it not till The requirement of Jesus Christ was more than he could perform. He came to Jesus, but he followed not after him. He inquired to know the way of life, and being taught it, turned his back upon it. He began early to seek the kingdom of God, and when he was just ready to enter it, he suddenly and forever abandoned the pursuit. We hear no more of him. Such a season of conviction and solicitude and blessed opportunity never returned He perished, probably, with his much-loved wealth.

This melancholy case flashes a light of warning full in our face. Let every man test his religion, test his love to God, test his hope of heaven by the broad rules and the severe principles of the gospel. Above all, having come to Christ with the great question of salvation, let us open our hearts to his searching scrutiny—meet his demands by a full surrender—and neither turn away from him, nor

disobey his word, for the wealth and crown of the world.

# XXIII.

## PRIMITIVE MODE OF EVANGELIZATION.

## BY REV. CLEMENT LONG, D.D.,

PROPESSOR IN WESTERN RESERVE COLLEGE.

"And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ."—
Acrs v. 42.

The apostles did not confine their labors at Jerusalem to public preaching on one day in seven. They seem to have thought it important thoroughly to evangelize the metropolis of their own nation. Jerusalem had enjoyed more religious light than any other city. But the apostles did not act as if it was a duty of equal love to raise all other cities to the same level in point of religious knowledge, before any further effort should be made for the spiritual good of Jerusalem. Nor did they think it was enough that the gospel was accessible to the people. They believed it was their duty, if we may judge from their conduct, to proclaim the word of life in the already highly favored city of Jerusalem daily,

and in every house.

If we were called to determine what they ought to have done. without information concerning the course they did in fact pursue. we might conceive that an enlarged benevolence should have directed them to tarry but a short time in any one place, since there were but few laborers, and the field was the world; that they should rather have passed rapidly from town to town, lifting up their voice in public assemblies, so as to give opportunity for all to hear; and thus should have carried the gospel to the greatest possible number, and made a more equal distribution of its blessings. Before the period to which reference is had in the text, multitudes had been converted in the first scene of their labors. Three thousand persons had been added to the Church on the day of Pentecost; soon after, the number of the disciples had risen to five thousand; and we read that, a little later, "believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women." We might suppose that from this prosperous beginning the good work could have gone forward without the apostles, and that they were wanted more in other places. But so did not the apostles themselves determine. They began to preach to their own countrymen; they preached daily; they carried the gospel to the houses of the people.

The example of the apostles, if it is not in itself decisive, may assist us to form an opinion concerning the degree and kind of spiritual culture which should be bestowed on these United States. I take the position, that the claims of the gospel ought to be pressed

on the attention of every individual.

This statement, considered apart from the spiritual state of the world, secures the approbation of all who love the soul and the cause of Christ. But it may be doubted whether, taking into account the religious wants of other portions of the globe, and the inadequacy of the existing means, such a degree of thoroughness in our evangelization of this country as I contend for, is admissible. If it should be granted that Christians ought at once to raise the means for sending the gospel to every individual of all nations, it may be questioned whether, while they neglect or fail to do this, the existing instrumentality should be so applied as my proposition This is the point of my inquiry; it should have a will demand. candid investigation. Ought the means now in use, or practically available, for the extension of the kingdom of Christ, to be so employed that the gospel shall be carried to every individual of our American population, and pressed on his attention?

In answer to this inquiry, I would say,

I. That it is right and best to make a special effort to supply the

religious wants of our population.

The example of the apostles removes all objection to this course, on the ground that it indicates partiality and a disregard of the law of equal love. The spiritual destitution of the world was greater then than now. But these inspired men tarried in Jerusalem till many thousands were converted, and they were so particular in their application of the truth as to carry the gospel to private houses. If so great thoroughness as this, in the work of evangelization, did not evince undue partiality for their countrymen, and a want of general benevolence, neither would a special effort in behalf of the spiritual interests of America, be charged on the Christians of this country as an exhibition of uncharitableness and selfishness.

The supposition cannot be entertained, that the apostles were acting, in this instance, under the influence of a Jewish prejudice. They were following the instructions of their Master. When he sent forth the twelve to preach during his life, he said to them: "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not. But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." And when, at his ascension, he enlarged their commission, charging them to "go into all the world and preach," he taught them that they must begin at Jerusalem. And that the

apostles considered themselves as performing a solemn duty when they gave the Jews a preference over the Gentiles, we see in the conduct of Paul and Barnabas on one occasion, when they met with opposition from their countrymen. They said: "It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you; but seeing ye put it far from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles." We find that Paul, in accordance with this view of his duty, always preached first in the synagogue of the Jews, when he commenced his labors in a heathen city.

This apostle thought it necessary to refute the objection to his doctrine of justification by faith alone, that the Jew would then have no advantage over the Gentile. (Rom. iii. 1.) He evidently supposed, that if such an inference could fairly be drawn from the doctrine, it would be a serious objection. He, therefore, affirmed that the Jews had preëminence in many respects, but chiefly be-

cause the oracles of God were committed to them.

He had a special desire for the salvation of his own countrymen. No language can express a stronger interest of one man in another than that which he used concerning the spiritual welfare of the Jews. "I could wish," he said, "that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh." He would willingly lose the blessedness of a follower of Christ, if that would avail to their conversion. The language of passion is not to be too literally interpreted; but he certainly meant to say, that he would gladly make any sacrifice for their salvation. This peculiar interest of the apostle in the Hebrews was partly the consequence, as he intimates, of his relation to them. They were his "kinsmen according to the flesh." We may justify a special regard for the welfare of our own people by his example. But his anxiety on their account was partly also the effect of the favor they had already received from God. To them, as he said, "pertained the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; and of them, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed forever." This was high distinction. But the apostle did not feel that the preëminence of the Hebrews in the matter of religious privilege was a reason why no more effort should be made for their spiritual good, and that it would be a breach of the law of equal love to bestow on them further religious culture. Their superiority over others, as the chosen people of God, was the very reason why he was willing to suffer everything that they might be saved. He could not bear that those who had been thus exalted, should fall from the high eminence to which God had raised them. It is right, therefore, to desire, with special earnestness, the salvation of such as have had uncommon religious advantages. We ought to seek the spiritual welfare of our country, both because it is the land where our friends and kindred dwell, and because the want of an

elevated religious character in a people so highly favored as we,

will be just cause for the deepest sorrow.

The gospel sanctifies, but it does not eradicate, our natural affections. Nay, it is mentioned as one of the effects of human depravity, in the epistle to the Romans, that men were "without natural afand this defect is there classed with sins of the darkest And if an exhibition of natural affection is ever allowable, what form should it sooner take than that of solicitude for the religious character of those who are dear to us? Not to supply the temporal wants of our friends is wholly inconsistent with the principles of the gospel. "If any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." He makes a wide departure from the spirit of the gospel, who omits suitable provision for the necessities of those whom nature and circumstances have made dependent on him. The sentiment may justly be applied to the case of our town, our county, our state, and our country, but with increasing emphasis as the circle of charity is contracted. If there are persons in our immediate vicinity who are in want of the necessaries of life, and we neglect to relieve them, it will not serve us for a valid excuse, that we have sent our bread to the poor in other lands. It is our duty, at all events, to care for those who are near to us. They are "our own" poor. If any provide not the necessaries of this life "for his own," he hath denied the faith. But it is surely more inconsistent with the spirit of the gospel to withhold the gospel itself from the community in which we live, than to refuse to minister to the wants of the poor. And it will not excuse the omission of duty in respect to the religious wants of our countrymen, that we have sent our missionaries to the heathen. We ought, doubtless, to send our missionaries to the heathen; but if, for this purpose, we leave unsupplied the religious destitutions at home, we show that our piety is not of the same type with that of Paul. It is taken for granted in the Scriptures, as a thing which ought to be expected, that our affections will be the most powerfully attracted towards those with whom we have the closest outward relations. Thus the beloved disciple asks: "He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God, whom he hath not seen?"

But not to insist on the superior claims to our charity of those with whom, by nature and situation, we are the most closely allied, it may be contended that a wise regard to the religious interests of the world at large, should prompt us to special effort in behalf of the spiritual welfare of this country. Our Lord knew well what was the best mode of proceeding in reference to the general prevalence of his cause, and he was disposed to carry it into practice. None of his true followers will be inclined to boast, that they have a more sincere, or a more enlightened philanthropy than he. He required his disciples to preach to none but "the lost sheep of the

house of Israel" in their first missionary tour; and when, at last, he commanded them to evangelize all nations, he instructed them to begin at home. And we have seen how the apostles understood their instructions. The Hebrews had been selected from all other people to enjoy peculiar light; they had been under religious training for ages, while the rest of the world was left in the darkness of nature. Yet our Lord directed that the gospel should first be preached to them. They were to have this advantage, it would seem, because they had already received so much religious instruction. We may conclude that we shall do no injustice to the world,

if we use special exertions to evangelize Christian America.

Our Saviour has not given the sanction of his authority to the mathematical interpretation of the law of equal love. And it is clear, from other considerations, that an objection to special efforts for the evangelization of our country cannot be sustained on the ground that we shall then do more for ourselves than for others. Should we undertake, in obedience to the dictates of an unenlightened conscience, an equal distribution of the means of grace among mankind, we should not only cease to add to the instrumentalities now employed in Christian countries, but we should pull down what for so many years we have been laboring to build up. To place ourselves as speedily as possible on a level with the heathen, we must suspend the cultivation of the home-field till an equal amount of labor had been bestowed on the wilderness. And as there are degrees of moral degradation among the heathen themselves, it would not consist with the law of love to man, mathematically interpreted, to begin their instruction with the more enlightened and the better-off, but we must lend our aid first to the lowest on the scale. He who does not feel prepared wholly to reverse the present order of things in the application of the means of grace, cannot make it an objection to a special effort for the evangelization of this country, that it is contrary to the law of equal love.

The kingdom of heaven is like leaven. It must diffuse itself from certain centres. The parts nearest to these centres will be leavened first. It is not in the power of man, with all the requisite pecuniary resources, to establish it at one and the same moment in all places. It is wrong to make the attempt. We are bound to obey those laws of religious progress which Heaven has established. There is harmony between our natural affections and our duty in this instance. The world will be the most surely and rapidly evangelized, if we bestow the most abundant labor on those spots which

have been the most highly cultivated in past time.

Jerusalem was a centre of religious influence in the days of the apostles. And we may conceive that this was one of the reasons why they were instructed to begin the publication of the gospel in this city. The Jews residing in all parts of the world, often visited the holy city. There were at Jerusalem, on the day of Pentecost,

"Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven." A publication of the gospel there, at that time, was equivalent to a publication of it in all parts of the Roman empire. The foreign Jews, converted on the day of Pentecost, afterwards acted the part of evan-

gelists in the countries where they resided.

The same spirit of enterprise which existed among the Jews in the age of the apostles, prevails among the people of these United States. Americans are found sojourning or residing in every nation under heaven. Wherever there is an opening for trade, or the exercise of invention or skill, or the introduction of a new and profitable business, they are present. Were they in fact Christians, as they are called, Christianity would be carried, without the aid of

missionary associations, to every country on the globe.

The intercourse of America with foreign nations will be much more frequent in coming years, with the increase of our population and of the productiveness of our industry. The improvement which is constantly taking place in our instruments of locomotion, will contribute immeasurably to the same result. Whatever our country is, in point of religious character, it will be known to be all over the world—if truly Christian, it will be recognized as such, and will diffuse abroad a Christian influence. It would not then, by any means, infringe the law of charity toward mankind, to put forth special exertions for the evangelization of nominally Christian America.

There is one respect, indeed, in which the United States is differently situated from the land of Palestine at the time of the apostles, in reference to the matter under discussion. Foreigners were not flocking to that country by hundreds of thousands in a year, there to take up their permanent abode. Here is a reason for particular attention to the spiritual improvement of our population, which did not exist in the case of the ancient Hebrews. A sufficient number of persons enter our borders from abroad every year, and become incorporated with our people, to form a respectable state. The addition to our population by immigration in the year 1848, amounted to a quarter of a million. In 1849 it was probably a hundred thousand more than this. The increase by immigration in a single year, exceeds the population of Connecticut at the present time; and at the present ratio of representation, would be entitled to five representatives in Congress. There are as many as ten states of this Union whose numbers are less than the immigration which pours into this country in one year. It is estimated that in the next ten years, the influx of foreigners will amount to four millions. Is it our duty to carry the gospel to the destitute in foreign lands, and is it not our duty—a duty devolving on us, and which no other nation can, or ought to perform in our stead-to give the gospel to the people of foreign lands, when they throng our thoroughfares, and make their homes by our sides?

But, furthermore, these immigrants do not at once break off all

connection with those whom they leave behind. Each one of them is bound by ties of intimacy to one or more persons who remain in the country whence he came. The attachment to their native country will indeed be stronger in some than in others. The German love of the father-land is not soon eradicated. A difference of language contributes to the power of former associations over the mind of the immigrant. But all will remember with interest the place of their birth, and scenes of their earlier joys and sorrows, cares and labors, and the friends from whom they have The millions who have come to our land in search of new homes, will be connected by the bonds of kindred or friendship with other millions abroad. A correspondence, by letter and otherwise. will be kept up between them. As the facilities of intercourse with foreign countries increase from year to year, particularly when the penny-postage system shall be adopted by sea and land, communication between our immigrant population and the countries of Europe from which they came, will be more frequent. In this manner America will sustain the closest relations with the people of that continent. Having derived her existence from one of the European nations, and having adopted as her children so many of the native citizens of others, she must be to them an object of peculiar interest. Whatever may be the feelings of the rulers of those nations, the people must cherish sentiments of regard for us as their We know that they do in fact sympathize with us, and that they are happy in the knowledge that we sympathize with The Irish, Germans, Italians, and others, desire the blessings of good government, because their brethren in this country enjoy the protection of equal laws.

In these facts we have a reason peculiar to this country, why an effort should be made to give the gospel to our whole population. We cannot but exert a powerful influence as a nation, over the character and destiny of Europe. Millions of our citizens will be personally known to some who are there. Our institutions, the practical working of our government, the manners, morals, and religion of our people, will be interesting subjects of inquiry to them. If we hold up the light of divine truth in our lives, it will be seen abroad. There is no nation at present, there never was a nation so happily situated as ours, for diffusing, far and wide, a good religious influence. If none should go forth from this country for the express purpose of carrying the gospel to other nations, our influence as a Christian people would be felt. But a truly Christian nation will send out missionaries. The missionary spirit will be active in proportion as the desire is intense for the evangelization of our own country. And a missionary enterprise which has hitherto languished will, I feel certain, take its proper place, ere long, beside those which have for their object the supply of the destitutions at home, and the conversion of the heathen. I refer to the incipient and feeble effort to propagate a pure Christianity in Europe. The

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providence of God points most evidently to America as the country which should take the lead in this enterprise. The gospel is here preached and held in as great purity, at least, as in any other country. And we claim kindred with almost every nation of Eu-There runs in the veins of millions of our people, the blood of various races on that continent. The society or societies which will hereafter divide with our home missionary and foreign missionary boards, the regards of the American churches, will find suitable men to send as missionaries to every part of Europe, among some portion of our population; but then we must have a flourishing state of religion at home, that those who may have in other respects suitable qualifications, may be seized with the missionary spirit, and may count it an honor to be sent abroad as ambassadors for God. Special efforts must be made for the conversion both of our native, and our naturalized and foreign population, that they may be prepared, like the foreign Jews at Jerusalem, on the day of Pentecost, to go back to the countries whence they or their fathers came with the gospel of Christ.

It is not, then, the dictate of a selfish policy, that we should feel peculiar anxiety about the religious interests of the United States. The instructions of our Saviour, and the conduct of the apostles, are our warrant for giving priority to the claims of our own people as objects of Christian charity. And it also appears as rational as it is scriptural, to do more for Christian America than for other countries; or, rather, it appears to be the best and the most expeditious method of doing good to the world, to relieve as fast as pos-

sible the spiritual wants of our own land.

It might be added to what has been said of the relations of this country to Europe, that a decline of piety at home must inevitably be followed by embarrassment in our missionary boards. And this is not theory. The secretaries of these boards know well that it has been a sorrowful fact more than once. A few years ago the American Board found it necessary to curtail its operations for want of funds. This was after a time of ruinous and sinful speculation, in which the church was too deeply involved. The same society is now laboring under a debt from which it emerges but slowly. It cannot avail itself of the advantages it has already gained to carry out its extended plans. It can hardly sustain itself at its present rate of expenditure. It is constantly a little in advance of its means. The mighty stream of emigration to California, and other schemes for accumulating wealth without industry, show what is the idol of the people, and why the treasury of the Lord is not filled. And there is likewise a deficiency of laborers. The number of pious young men is decreasing; and of those who are pious a smaller proportion devote themselves to the work of the ministry and of missions.

The remedy for these embarrassments in the operations of our foreign missionary societies, is a deeper spirit of piety at home.

The persons to whom the management of these societies is committed do sometimes assure us, indeed, that if the churches were more engaged in the cause of foreign missions, there would be more piety at home. And in a certain sense this is true. The existence of a warmer interest in missions would be an evidence of an improved state of religion among us; and Christian benevolence, prompted by this deeper interest in religion, would doubtless react upon and assist in sustaining the spirit of piety. But real devotion to Christ, it must be confessed, does not begin at our fingers' ends, to enter thence into our hearts. True religion does not commence in some work of our hands, and end in the conversion of our souls. The good fruits of righteousness do not bear the root. "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth good things." When the grace of God was bestowed in an extraordinary degree on the churches of Macedonia, and "in a great trial of affliction, the abundance of their joy, and their deep poverty, abounded unto the riches of their liberality," and "they besought Paul with much entreaty" that he would carry their gift to the poor saints at Jerusalem; they "first gave their own selves to the Lord," and then to Paul in obedience to "the will of God." And this was the true and proper order of these acts of consecration: the spirit of piety must first be in the soul, sanctifying the whole man for the Lord, and then in the overt act of performing deeds of charity. It ought not to be expected that America will do what she ought for the heathen, till she first gives herself to the Lord. Were it our main object to publish repentance and remission of sins among all nations, it would be best to begin at Jerusalem. Could another day of Pentecost be enjoyed in the American church, and Jesus Christ be preached from house to house in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, a new impulse would be given to the cause of missions.

Secondly, One special effort for the spiritual good of the United States, should take the form of a presentation of the word and

truth of God to every individual.

We have the authority of the Scriptures for this sentiment. The apostles ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ from house to house.

That very command of our Lord which requires us to "preach the gospel to every creature," refers as much to the personal application of truth, as to the extent of territory which should be evangelized. We must carry the gospel to individual men as well as to all places. There are persons in the midst of this community who never hear the gospel. The same authority which obliges us to carry the gospel to India or Africa, binds us to preach it to those in our immediate neighborhood who never hear it. It is preposterous to send missionaries half round the globe, and leave a part of those "creatures" to whom we are commanded to "preach," perishing in ignorance and sin on our right hand and on our left.

It will not excuse such an omission of duty, that the gospel is accessible to our population, and they can hear it if they will. If this was strictly true, the command to preach the gospel to every creature in this part of the world would not have been fulfilled. Multitudes of our fellow-citizens do not feel their need of the gospel, and will not come to our places of religious worship; they will not purchase and read the Bible of their own accord, and thus become the means of awakening in themselves an interest in the public ordinances of religion. The benevolence of religion will not permit us to say, that they ought then to go without the gospel. This would be just, one might contend: they do not deserve that further trouble and expense should be incurred on their account. But God in the gospel does not treat men according to their deserts. Who of us deserved that the Lord Jesus Christ should be at so much pains and expense for our salvation? Ours is a religion of mercy. It is because all are ill-deserving, and might in strict justice be left to suffer for their sins, that we have any gospel to preach. He who has prepared the way for the publication of a gospel of grace by the sacrifice of himself, expects his gospel to be preached in the same spirit of self-sacrifice. As towards the author of our salvation, who has bought us with his blood, it is just and obligatory that we proclaim the good news of pardon by Christ in unwilling ears. If men do not come into our religious assemblies to hear it, we must carry it out into the highways and hedges. We must entreat men in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God.

If it should be objected to this view of our duty, that we are only required by our Lord to preach the gospel, let it be considered that preaching in the New Testament sense of that word, is not necessarily that formal presentation of truth which we now designate by the term. He was a preacher, in the time of the apostles, who lifted up his voice in any public place, as in the streets of a city, and drew to himself the attention of the passengers. When our missionaries in Madras stand at the gate of their residences and address a few words to any who may pass concerning the faith in Christ, they are fulfilling the command to "preach." In the text the apostles are said to have "preached" in private houses; and it is said of Philip in the Acts, (viii. 35,) that he "preached" to an individual. The object of preaching is not to make a public harangue, but to produce in the mind of the hearer a certain effect; when this can be done only by mere private address, we act in the spirit of our Lord's command when we employ this mode of communication. The formal and public presentation of the truth at stated times and places, for very obvious reasons, can never be discontinued. speaker would be among the last to propose any substitute for the labors of an educated, settled, and permanent ministry. But the whole duty of preaching the gospel has not been performed, when it has been proclaimed to such as have come to the public religious assembly for the express purpose of hearing it. The apostles did

not think that their duty was discharged when they had spoken in the place where men usually congregated for religious purposes. And they were probably impelled to carry the gospel to private houses by a constraining feeling of love for man and for Christ,

rather than by a mere sense of duty.

Our circumstances are, in some respects, quite different from those of the early Christians—a fact which renders the personal application of divine truth even more obligatory upon us than it was upon them. The gospel was then new, and it had the attraction of novelty. Great numbers were dissatisfied with the existing religions, and desired a change. Many were in an attitude of expectation. Christianity was, moreover, introduced by signs and wonders. For these reasons the apostles were waited on by throngs of eager listeners. On one day three thousand were converted. The Christians, it is related, had favor with all the people. When the lame man was healed at the gate of the temple, all the people ran together unto Peter and John. Afterwards it is stated that the people "magnified" them. When the apostles were arrested for persisting in their work, the captain of the temple and the officers brought them before the council "without violence, because they feared the people." The attention of the people of Jerusalem generally was favorably directed towards them: "Ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine," said the High Priest, "and intend to bring this man's blood upon us." Such an excitement as this occurring now in the city of New York, setting aside the consideration of the miracle connected with it, would be a matter of talk and inquiry through the whole country. Nor was the interest in the gospel confined to the Jews. Wherever Paul preached among the Gentiles, he seems to have drawn to himself the attention of the people generally. The movements of the apostle were noticed and closely observed. On one occasion it was said of him and his associates: "These that have turned the world upside down, are come hither also."

Very different is the case with us at present. Men are far enough from being beside themselves with religious frenzy. They attend upon the ordinances of religion, so far as they do attend, too generally, with a feeling of indifference, and they absent themselves with a disrelish which is little more positive than indifference. The facts of the gospel were mighty when they were recent. "With great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection." But this fact, and other facts of which it is the proof, although they deserve the attention of every age as much as that of the apostles, are now regarded by the many with the same coldness, almost, as any event of a remote antiquity. It is therefore much more necessary for us than it was for the first Christians, to bring the gospel home to individuals and urge it on their thoughts, that they may be induced and prepared to attend with interest and profit on the public ordinances of religion. Jews and Gentiles would go to hear

the apostles preach without solicitation. Their preaching was the wonder of the day. Here there is a large proportion of the population who will not come to our churches of their own accord. There is no other way but to search them out and compel them to come in. The Spirit of God has as much power now as he ever had; but our circumstances are different, and our means must consequently be varied. When Christianity was first introduced, supernatural means had to be employed. Now it has obtained a footing in the world, and it is suitable that the labors of the people of God should take the place of supernatural means. The engagement of the attention and the impression of the mind, so far as it is made to depend on the use of means, once accomplished by the miraculous facts of the gospel, should now be effected through the instrumentality of Christian effort.

The importance of the stated preaching of the gospel cannot be too highly estimated. But it can effect, directly, only so many as present themselves in the house of God. There is, in every parish where the gospel is statedly and publicly preached, a missionary field, in respect to which the command to preach to every creature may be more appropriately applied, if possible, than in respect to pagan nations. This missionary work is not a substitute for public instruction on the Sabbath, nor can there be any interference between the two methods of promoting the cause of Christ. On the contrary, the presentation of the truth to individuals must be an aid to the public labors of the ministry. It will increase the number of attendants on public worship, and with the blessing of God, the number of members of the churches. If there is collision anywhere, it will be between the different religious denominations.

But the fear of incurring the charge of proselytism, must not deter Christians from the effort to evangelize our whole population. Our division into sects, when it renders us jealous of all attempts to convert those who are not embraced within the limits of our parishes, is a departure from the true faith and the true church, and the worst kind of heresy. The consequence of regard for this sectarian jealousy will be, that we shall value at a higher rate the prosperity of our denominations than the cause of Christ, and through fear of giving offence to some branch of the church, shall resign to the kingdom of Satan those who might be saved. We shall sacrifice the interests of the Redeemer's kingdom to the supposed interests of rival sects. What would this be, but that "heresy" which Paul connects with "hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife," and "seditions," and which he denominates "works of the flesh," and opposes to "the fruit of the Spirit?" A large proportion of our population in every part of the country, but particularly in the West, have none to care for their souls. Christian truth has little more direct influence over their minds than if they were pagans. They are near enough to the light to have an increased amount of responsibility, but not near enough to receive actual moral benefit from their situation. They could place themselves under the influence of divine truth, but they do not; Christians do not carry them the gospel; and the consequence is, that they perish in the midst of a land of Bibles and Sabbaths. If any denomination of Christians which has essential, saving truth, should seek to bring these wandering sheep within their fold, let us bid them "God speed." There is not so strong a spirit of rivalry among us, I should hope, that we should prefer none would enter heaven, unless they found admission through the doors of our denomination.

Besides, we can easily avoid the temptation to regard with jealousy denominational attempts to extend the influence of Christian truth. The kind of effort to which I refer can be made by all our evangelical denominations in common. It need not be prosecuted with reference to the connection of individuals with any one of our congregations. All who love the Bible can unite in an effort to place it in the hands of those who do not possess it. There is no proselytism in this. The Bible distributor can converse seriously with the neglecter of gospel ordinances concerning the interests of his soul, without introducing the subject of baptism, or episcopacy, or methodism, or presbyterianism. He can leave with him a tract in which every allusion to denominational peculiarities shall be omitted. He can pray with him in language which becomes the mouth of every penitent sinner, whether he be of one order or another. Such a union of action has been found practicable; it should be encouraged. Let us co-operate as far as we are able, and where we must separate, let us separate with goodwill. Above all things, let us not cherish a spirit of separation. Let us rejoice when any wandering soul returns to Christ, whatever form of Christianity he may think fit to assume.

Without that individual application of the gospel for which I contend, there is reason to apprehend that infidelity will become

generally prevalent.

The gospel is not, like one of the necessaries of this life, an article in general demand, which men will seek if it be not carried to them. Men naturally hate the light, and they will not come to the light, lest their deeds should be reproved. The gospel is wanted to enlighten the very power which should judge of its worth, and to waken in the soul a sense of its own spiritual necessities. Men are inclined, either from aversion or stupidity, to absent themselves from the ordinances of religion. The neglect of the means of grace will become general among those who do not feel a personal interest in divine things, when it ceases to be disreputable not to attend upon them. And this will happen, when religion ceases to be aggressive, and the church is contented just to maintain the position she has won. When the number of the pious diminishes by death, and their places are unsupplied by new recruits from among the unbelievers, public sentiment will be formed by the

ungodly, and will be shaped according to their wishes. What is reputable and disreputable will then be determined by the opposers of religion. We must not be satisfied with opening places of worship where the people may hear the word of God, if such shall be their pleasure. We must carry the gospel to them individually; we must, if possible, awaken in their minds a feeling of their need of salvation; we must set before them inducements sufficient to bring them to the house of God. Only thus shall we secure that a majority of our American population do not become infidel, or, I should rather say, atheistic, in sentiment and practice. As a nation, we may be "without God in the world," if the method of extending the influence of the gospel now insisted on, be not more thoroughly

prosecuted by the church.

Not more than one seventh part of our whole population is included in churches which, by the utmost stretch of charity, can be regarded as evangelical. Can it be supposed that more than two sevenths, in addition to the church members, attend on the public services of relia on? A majority of the people of this country, it is probable, live without instruction in the saving truths of the gos-The consequence of this state of things, if not speedily corrected, must be the deepest moral debasement. From long absence from the house of God, and never hearing the names of God and the Saviour uttered except in blasphemy, our people may come to think that there is nothing more in our religion than in the idle dreams of superstition. They may lose their faith in any reality but that which strikes their senses. They may take a step beyond the unbelief of the speculative infidel, who feels it to be necessary to maintain his opposition to Christianity by reason. Exclusive occupancy of the mind for months and years with the interests of the present world, may induce utter forgetfulness of God. They may lose all apprehension of his existence, much more of his holy spiritual law, and of their need of salvation through Jesus Christ. It may be a thing of course with them that there is nothing better for a man than present enjoyment, nothing worse than the suffering and death of the body.

With this stupid infidelity, there will be united, in the case of great numbers, disregard of the laws of morality. A life of virtue is the happiest life; but men whose whole object is the attainment of earthly happiness, are, with difficulty, persuaded of it. Strong temptation overpowers their faith. A present enjoyment appears to them more desirable than the avoidance of a future, and (in their view) uncertain evil. They will sooner incur any risk than suffer an irksome self-denial. They blind themselves to the most obvious consequences of their vices, through the influence of unlawful desire. They act with the utmost fool-hardiness, often. They hope the laws of nature will be changed to accommodate their wishes. The laws of evidence, they imagine, will be suspended to favor their concealment. Effects, which to themselves appear in-

evitable the moment an action is done, in the heat of passion, seem quite improbable. Let a sense of religion cease to influence the community, and worldly interest become the sole restraining prin-

ciple, and vice and crime, in every form, would abound.

I may mention here the danger, or rather the certainty, that popular corruption would infuse itself into our government, and that a corrupt government would react upon, and more thoroughly vitiate the morals of the people, if, through the neglect of Christians, those who have the control in our national affairs, the majority, should be infidels or atheists. Our government will be what we, the people, may choose to make it. An irreligious nation will have irreligious rulers. Our national Executive and Legislature will reflect the character of those from whom their power is de-The blessing of self-government may thus become the bane of its possessors. And how fearful is the responsibility of those who may place in stations of the highest civil authority men who will not hesitate, for some sinister purpose, to trample on the laws of the land, and the principles of morality and religion! A person acting in his individual capacity, does injury by unprincipled conduct within a comparatively narrow circle, and with a power of influence comparatively feeble. A person clothed with the authority of President of this republic, who violates his oath of office, or commits an act of flagrant injustice, becomes an example of wickedness to the whole people—an example which is unspeakably more seductive, because it carries with it the vast influence of the highest office in the gift of the people. The party which places the President in his chair, seldom fails to sustain him in all his measures. By the fact of defending his wrong measures, the party participates in the guilt of its President, and shares in his responsibility. Thus, the bad actions of men in high official stations are a thousand-fold more corrupting than those of men in private life. The right of self-government is a valuable safeguard; it is also a most solemn trust. Through it the people can inflict on their country an irreparable moral injury. By means of the elective franchise, they can confer on an individual a power of influence to deprave the national morals, equal, I had almost said, to their whole united influence. Through their agent, the President of the Republic, they can unite in perpetrating wickedness on the largest scale.

It is common to insist that our government is in danger of being subverted through the influence of irreligion among our people. Is it not a juster cause for alarm, that the morality of our government may be subverted, and that the government may continue to stand, a mighty engine of moral evil? The danger does not seem to me to be at so great a distance that it should excite no apprehension. We choose our rulers by simple majorities. The character of the nation, as a whole, may not be very deprayed, and yet the power may be in the hands of the wicked, and it may be

abused in the appointment to office of the most unprincipled men. Does the religious community now compose so large a proportion of the nation, that it is thought to be important to consult their wishes in the selection of candidates for office? Do they not often feel constrained to sustain such candidates as are put forward, without regard to their preferences, candidates whom the people will suffer to be elected, but not such as they themselves can approve? We support the "available" candidates, in other words, those whom the war spirit, or the spirit of opposition, or of encroachment, or rapacity, or revolution, will sustain. Our candidates must not be unacceptable to the irreligious many. In selecting between them, we make a choice between evils; we vote for him from whom we have the least to fear. We do not like to take the responsibility of proposing a third candidate, and increasing thus the chances of success of the worst, satisfying ourselves, as well as we can, with the hope that our man, if we should elect him, will, as our agent, and in the public business which we commit to his care. pursue an upright, honorable course. And when our utmost efforts are unavailing, and the people choose to place in the chair of state the most objectionable candidate, as we suppose, we are oppressed with sorrow from the anticipation that some grievous national wrong will be done by him, and we shall suffer moral disgrace and ruin.

It may be thought that Christians could form a Christian party, and, by holding the balance of power, bring one or the other of the two great political divisions of the people to respect their wishes. I should fear that such a party would become corrupt, and dishonor the cause they would espouse. An organized body holding political power, will be courted by persons of ambitious views, who will make the fairest professions for the sake of office. The support of such men would bring discredit on the party, and a stain upon religion. A party which should appeal to the lust for office in a candidate by holding out its support as a lure to his ambition, whatever might be the worth of the end for which it used the person bought by such a bribe, would be already corrupt.

There is a more excellent way. Looking to God for aid, let us undertake what, in the judgment of all, must be a truly Christian enterprise; let us pursue religious ends by religious means; let us seek the conversion of those who have political power in their hands, and the extermination of the cause of our danger: and this, not merely by providing the institutions of the gospel for those who habitually frequent the house of God, and in whose respect for virtue, and hatred of every wrong and injustice, we feel the most confidence, but by bringing the claims of the gospel home to the consciences of our whole population. Our only hope is in a thorough evangelization of our country. And this involves the primitive mode of effort, where "in every house" the apostles "ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ."

But we should ever remember, that all we do for the spiritual enlightenment of our neighbors and fellow-citizens, will only serve to increase their guilt in the sight of God, if it does not bring them to repentance. Our labors will leave them in a more deplorable condition, if they are not most signally useful. Having once entered on our work, we must feel that our effort is incomplete—that it is worse than a failure, so long as its prime object, their salvation, is unaccomplished. Here is a motive of inconceivable weight for a thorough evangelization. And since man can only speak to the outward ear, and cannot convert the soul, we should labor in a spirit of humble dependence on him, who, after his servants have "planted" and "watered," is able to "give the increase."

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#### XXIV.

## THE CLOSING YEAR CONTEMPLATED AND IMPROVED.

# BY REV. HENRY T. CHEEVER,

NEW YORK.

"Lord, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is; that I may know how frail I am."—Psalm xxxix. 4.

This must be the prayer of every reflective mind, as we approach the close of this jubilee-year of the nineteenth century. It is a season when almost every one pauses in the whirl of being, to look thoughtfully backward and forward. There are probably few members of a religious congregation, be they young or old, that do not have a time for thinking and resolving at the going out of the old year, and the coming in of a new. None that have been rightly trained will let such an anniversary go by without reviewing the past, and endeavoring to make ready for the future, by girding up the loins of their minds, and committing themselves earnestly to the Divine care and guidance.

It is but the mark of a man with the capacity of looking before and after, to improve such stopping-places and eras of time, for self-examination, calm inquiry into one's life and habits, recapitulation of mercies, repentance for sins, resolutions of amendment, well-doing, and renewed devotion to God. Not so to use these new points of embarkation upon the great sea of probationary existence, is in the highest degree unwise; and it is evidence of a frivolous worldling's mind, and of an unreflecting habit, that ill becomes a being of reason, of memory, and improvement, as man is, and an heir of immortality. At its close, if at no other stage of the year, it becomes us all, looking out upon the great future, to

"Walk silent, thoughtful, on the solemn shore Of that vast ocean we shall sail so soon."

There is nothing more trite, or oftener upon the lips of men, than remarks concerning the swiftness of time, the brevity of life, the uncertainty and transitory nature of all things human,—what shadows we are, and what shadows we pursue. But the very com-

monness of these observations makes the truth contained in them so much the less impressive, for they are often in the mouths of persons that have little sense of them in their hearts. It is easy to say, how short life is, like a vapor that appeareth for a little while, and then vanisheth away; how we spend our years as a tale that is told; how man, at his best estate, is altogether vanity. And it were easy to multiply illustrations from nature of human frailty, and life's transitoriness, by the morning dew, the fading flower, and

the tints of eve.

But it is not easy to keep up a practical sense of the shortness and the uncertainty of life—my life; the importance and solemnity of my probation; the necessity of my living so as to be ready at any time to die. David felt the need of calling upon God to teach and impress this upon him, for he could not realize it otherwise: "Lord, make me to know mine end; and the measure of my days, what it is; that I may know how frail I am." It is the Lord only that can form in us, by his Spirit, a just appreciation of our latter end. David was a man of action, of business; all his life, except those few quiet pastoral years of his youth, that laid the foundation of his after greatness, he was busy in self-defence, counterworking and baffling his enemies, or struggling for the throne; or else immersed in the cares and burden of the kingdom and crown. In such a state he felt, as every man of business and care must, that God only could make him know his end; that he only could keep his mind impressed with a just view of the nearness of life's close, and what was its proper end. It does not mean, what the face of the passage would seem to bear, Lord, make me to know the time I am to die, the number of years I am to live: but make me wisely to consider my latter end, that it is surely coming, and to realize it as near at hand, and to live habitually with reference to it. So teach me to number my days, that I may apply my heart unto wisdom.

That I MAY KNOW HOW FRAIL I AM. It is always a view of the nearness of our end that makes us feel our frailty. It is when we see death looking us in the face, that we learn how frail we are; and it is a sense of this maintained in the soul that enables us to live in a readiness to die. It is thus that we attain the double end urged in the saying of the ancient, "Live as though you were to die to-morrow,—live as though you were to live forever."

The text and the season naturally suggest as the theme of discourse, The importance of our keeping in mind the wintry season of death. This I shall urge by three considerations:

I. That we may be prepared for death.

 That while we live we may live right for ourselves and for God.

III. That we may be stimulated to make the most of life for

doing good.

I. It is important to keep in mind, that we must soon die, in order that we may be prepared to die. Of all the motives that induce

men to seek God and prepare for eternity, the strongest undoubtedly is, the inevitable certainty that they must soon pass, by death, into another world, in which every man's destiny will be fixed forever, according to the character he has formed in this. Take away this motive, and the number of persons would be small indeed that would be seriously making ready for the world of spirits. And just in proportion as the term of man's life here should be lengthened, and his liability to accident and disease be diminished, would be his indisposition and delay in preparing for the world to come. It is easy to imagine how fearfully the tide of depravity, in the world before the flood, must have been swollen, by the long course its waves had to run before breaking upon the reefs of eternity. by the lengthened career of sinning individual sinners had, before being brought up by death. The comparative distance of the end of life, the foreseen probability of a long line of years wherein to enjoy the pleasures of this mortal state, joined with the primitive soundness and vigor of the human constitution, brought in such a flood of wickedness upon the old world, that God was compelled to overwhelm it with the flood of water. And when the earth began to be peopled again, the limit of human life was wisely contracted, in order that man might not have so long a period to calculate upon for enjoying the pleasures of sin, and becoming confirmed in habits of alienation from God, and thoughtlessness of eternity.

This was probably one reason in the Divine Mind for limiting our term here to three score and ten. It would not be safe to trust us with a longer lease. The foreseen probability, that we might live here in vigor, one, two, and three centuries, or more, so far from making us live better, and with a wiser reference to the world to come, would undoubtedly be disastrous to our eternal interests, by allowing us to settle down inveterately in habits of worldliness; till, when death at length came, it would find us less ready for the summons than we should have been had that summons been earlier.

and our years of probation many less.

Now, the fact being, that our time here is short, that very few of us, if any, are likely to reach even three score and ten, that accident and sickness in a thousand forms stand ready to cut us down in the midst of our days, it is certainly the part, and one would think it would be the habit of reasonable men, to be seriously preparing for death. The practical effect of a deep conviction of our frailty, and that we cannot but soon die, must be to induce us to be getting ready. And when we see men not getting ready, making no preparation for the event that is absolutely certain, and beyond all comparison the most momentous in the history of our being, the conclusion is irresistible, that such men forget they are soon to die, do not believe that Death is ready to strike them. "Man knoweth not his time: as the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare, so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them."

The delusion is almost universal, which the poet of the Night Thoughts has described so accurately:—

"All men think all men mortal but themselves;
Themselves, when some alarming shock of Fate
Strikes through their wounded hearts the sudden dread:
But their hearts, wounded like the wounded air,
Soon close; where past the shaft no trace is found.
As from the wing no sear the sky retains,
The parted wave no furrow from the keel,
So dies in human hearts the thought of death."

This common delusion must be prevented by a constant view of death as near at hand, ourselves liable, nay, likely, at any time, to become his prey, if we would realize the vanity of the things of earth, and be preparing every day to quit them. All the means, therefore, we can use to this end, in the improvement of events,

times, and seasons, it is wise to avail ourselves of.

II. It is important to keep in mind, that we must individually soon die, and die each alone, in order that we may live right for ourselves and for God. I have put these two together, living right for ourselves and for God, because they are in fact inseparable. We cannot do the one without securing the other, for they are, to every practical intent, the same as identical. Living most singly for the glory of God, is promoting most certainly the truest and highest interests of the man. He that serves best his Maker, does in reality best serve himself also. And he will be likely to do both most effectually, that lives with an habitual reference to death, keeping it always in mind, that his time here is short, and that he

may on the very morrow be summoned away.

In every age of the church those Christians who have served God most faithfully, and who have given all diligence to make their own calling and election sure, have lived, as it were, all their days with one foot in the grave, almost expecting to die daily. Holy Baxter was such a man, laboring his life long with a feeble constitution, a liability to disease, and almost incessant pains and ailments. that would have prevented an ordinary mind from attempting anything, and that made him practically feel each day as if it might be his last. And vet how nobly did he live for himself and for God; and with what unwearied industry and success did he pursue life's great end, the good of his fellow-men, and the glory of his Who is there too, that has not observed in his own experience, that just in proportion to the felt nearness of death has been his earnestness in devotion, in well-doing, and in serving God? It is not when health is the most vigorous, spirits the most buoyant, prospects of life the brightest, and the expectation of beholding many days and of seeing much good the most sanguine, it is not then that the Christian lives most above the world, and the flesh, and the nearest to God. But when sickness comes upon a man; when bodily infirmities weigh heavily; when the spirits droop, and life looks clouded, and the world dark and dreary; when thoughts

"Of the last bitter hour come like a blight Over thy spirit, and sad images Of the stern agony, and shroud, and pall, And breathless darkness, and the narrow house, Make thee to shudder, and grow sick at heart,"—

then it is that a man doth gird up the loins of his mind, become sober, and watch unto prayer. Then do we bestir ourselves to forsake folly and vanity, and mind what we are about. Then do we betake ourselves to serious thought and devotion, and holy living, and serving God. Then it is, it all has not been wrong before, if we have not been doing everything else, (as alas, so many are,) but getting ready to die, so that we can look death in the face, with the composure of a Christian whose peace has been made with God in health,—then it is that the soul plumes her feathers for the flight into eternity.

That we may keep our wings, as Christians, poised and ready for such a flight, that they may not flutter and tire if we are called to mount suddenly, we must converse often with death, we must go to the house of mourning, we must entertain the intimations of our mortality, we must purposely lay to heart the lessons of our frailty, which are constantly being taught us, in the changing seasons, and all the discipline of life. Under the moral effect of such lessons we shall be most likely to live right for ourselves and

for God.

III. It is important to keep in mind that we must soon die, in order that we may be stimulated to make the most of life for doing good. It is the consideration of the work to be done in this, our probation; of the incalculable good we may each accomplish; of the opportunity and power we have to make impressions upon each other lasting as the soul; of the immortal interests here pending; of the eternal destinies here making up; of the priceless souls here to be saved or lost,-it is this that stamps eternity upon fleeting time, and gives an interest solemn as the grave to every hour of our earthly existence. O, if we felt it as we ought, how busy would these hearts, and hands, and powers of speech be in doing good! How penurious we should have been of the days of the year that is now closing, that we might have had them all to spend in usefulness and duty; in relieving distress and want; plucking brands from the burning; reclaiming the vicious and profligate; confirming the reformed; winning souls to Christ; preparing ourselves and preparing others for the awards of eternity.

If we truly realized that our time here were so short, the precious working-days of our probation so few, the winter of life so soon upon us, and this in all probability the only period of our existence in which we can be instrumental of saving souls, how would it quicken our zeal in the service of God; how fertile we should be in plans of usefulness; how enterprising and eager to bring them to a head; how instant and self-denying to improve all facilities for

doing good;—nay, how should we pant for the accomplishment of all we possibly could do in this dream-like life. How would our hands and tongue wait upon our heart in the cause of Christ and salvation, till heart should cease to beat, and tongue could talk no more. What, then, we might be we ought to be; and it is this realization of death as standing at the door, and just ready to summon us away from reaping a harvest in this broad field of christian activity, where he that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him,—it is this keeping in mind that we must so soon die, and leave forever this broad land of labor for Christ and men's salvation, that would be a powerful incentive to work while the day lasts, and to do with our might whatsoever our hands find to do for the eternal well-being of our fellow-men, and the glory of God.

If the christian minister, for instance, had brought it feelingly home to his heart, as he began the year which is now departing, that this might be the last of his being a shepherd to his beloved flock, the last year in which he could stand as the ambassador of heaven, and beseech men for Christ's sake, to become reconciled to God, what faithfulness and pungency it would have given to his preaching; what force and earnestness to his appeals; what untiring energy and zeal in urging upon the unconverted the claims of the Gospel, and striving to bring them to repentance, that they might be represented as his jewels in the day of the Lord Jesus. Or, let the conscientious business-man seriously have entertained the thought, as he stood upon the threshold of the year whose sands are now ebbing, that this would be the last wherein he should meet and manage his family, his journeymen, and clerks, how carefully would he have dealt with, and walked before them, and how would he have endeavored to exert such an influence, and leave such an impression upon their minds, as would speak in favor of God and religion, when he should be in his grave.

Now, none of us know what lies in the lap of future years, any more than we did what lay in the lap of the year just expiring, at its commencement. But one thing we are certain of, that our time here is short, and it becometh us, as Christians, to do with our might whatsoever our hand findeth to do in the service of God. And it more than becometh those who are not Christians, it is of infinite consequence for them now to repent. Let not the good resolutions which every wise man will be forming at a time like this, perish in the intention merely. Make every good intention an act, and acts will become habits, and you will be established in well-doing and holy living. It is by virtue of the same great law of habit that men become both good and bad. Good men execute good intentions, and repeat good acts, till they have passed into habits, and the good man is wedded indissolubly to what is good, settled unalterably in ways of virtue, piety, and obedience, and the soul becomes free with the freedom of goodness, the glorious

liberty of the sons of God. Victous and selfish men, on the other hand, repeat vicious and worldly pleasures and indulgences, till they too have become habits with the grasp of an iron vice, and the

soul is in bondage to sin, enslaved to corruption.

If there be one among our hearers or readers, who is conscious that the folds of evil habits are coiling around him, like the spiral of the anaconda about his victim, we earnestly say to that man, now or never is the time to break from their dread-FUL EMBRACE. Rise like Samson, with the energy which the sight of opening perdition must give you, and in the strength with which Christ himself will endow you, if you will but trust in him, and break their bands asunder, and cast their cords from you. How dangerous to defer those momentous reformations, and that making ready for death, which conscience, and the loud voices of Providence, and the changing eras of time are so solemnly preaching to The longer the claims of religion and the monitions your hearts. and calls of God, by his word and his discipline, are neglected, the more do the indisposition and difficulty of yielding to them increase; and, all unknown perhaps, to himself, a man will be receding, step by step, degree after degree, from the warm zone of tenderness, hope, and impressibility, till his heart will enter the arctic circle of utter insensibility, and become fixed and relentless in eternal ice.

And, do any ask how this may not be with them, and how they shall avoid being bound forever in the icy fetters of stupidity, and fatally settling down in the frigid zone of carnal self-complacency, or religious indifference; then we can tell them, It will not be without such a resolute and decisive struggle of effort on their part, and such an earnest application to the Lord Jesus Christ for pardon and eternal life, as made the Saviour of sinners himself say, seeing its importance, "Agonize to enter in at the strait gate, for many, I say unto you, shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able." May the Holy Spirit nail this charge to your memory and conscience, until you have truly entered in. Under his teaching may you adopt the prayer of the text, and be so taught to number your days as to apply your heart unto wisdom. Be instructed by the swiftness with which this year has fled, how soon another will hurry away, and how quickly the years of eternity will begin. Even now the death-ambush may be laying for your feet, or the arrow may be on the string that is to pierce and lay you low.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>e</sup> Death steals on man with noiseless tread; No plea, no prayer delivers him; From midst of life's unfinished plan, With sudden hand it severs him: And ready or not ready, no delay, Forth to his Judge's bar he must away."

